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MANCHESTER QUARTERLY ADVERTISER,

JULY, 1899.

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2. To publish from time to time works illustrating or elucidating the literature, art, and history of the County.
3. To provide a place of meeting where persons interested in the furtherance of these objects can associate together.

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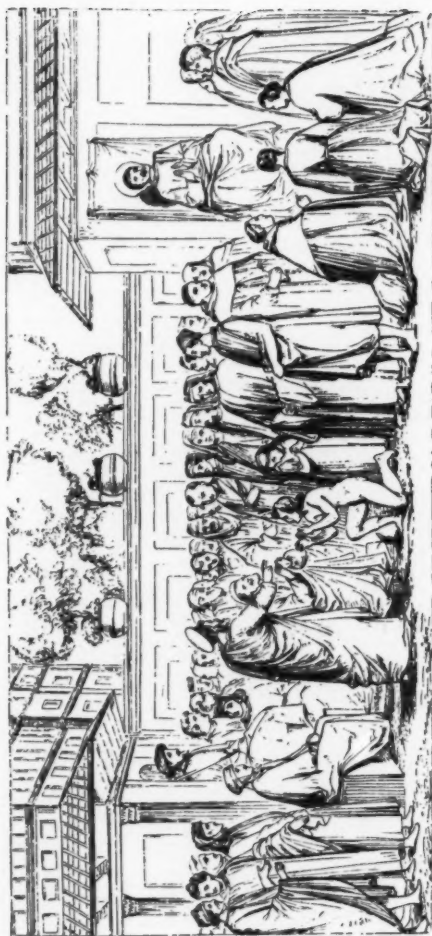
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RESUSCITATION OF THE KING'S SON.



ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

BY LAURENCE CLAY.

THE fellowship of friends is open to most men. In the main it is open to us in proportion to the depth and largeness of our own individuality and sympathies.

We imagine that where reciprocal sympathies, moral and intellectual, bound O'Shaughnessy and friend, happy indeed was that union. For we judge that O'Shaughnessy had all the temperamental qualities that cement and make permanently delightful, intercourse between man and man. With him it was a friendship exhilarating in character, or nothing. O'Shaughnessy was by nature imaginative, sanguine, magnetic, and intellectual.

Mrs. Chandler, in her brief monogram of his life, says that she thought O'Shaughnessy compressed more happiness into his 36 years of life than most men, even of imagination, find in a life lasting into hoary age. "He lived in his loves, his griefs, his works, and his friendships." One loved O'Shaughnessy for the fascinating and attractive "personal equation" that he was, for his intellectual and poetical verve, his spontaneity and his sensibility always nervous and responsive. We can but briefly relate the salient facts of what was an uneventful and, humanly speaking, all too brief life.

B

O'Shaughnessy, the son of an Irish artist, was connected through his mother with the Deacons, a well-known Lancashire family whose estates were attainted on account of its adherence to the Stuart cause. His mother's great grandfather was the celebrated Dr. Deacon, one of the last of the non-juring Bishops, whose monument is in St. Ann's Churchyard, in Manchester. It was from his mother he inherited his literary and poetic tastes. O'Shaughnessy was born in London in 1844, and his father died when he was a child. He was brought up solely by his mother, at Kensington. At the age of 17 he obtained employment through the influence of the late Lord Lytton, at the library of the British Museum, as transcriber. Shortly thereafter he was promoted to a senior assistantship in the zoological department of the Museum, where he worked under the late Professor Owen, and ultimately he became an acknowledged authority on the class "Reptilia."

It was about 1870 that O'Shaughnessy, then 26 years of age, still unmarried, became a frequent member of the limited but congenial gathering of leading literary and artistic Londoners at the house of Ford Madox Browne, in Fitzroy Square, London. It was a coterie that probably could not be matched to-day either in London or the provinces. First and foremost both the Rossetti's were regular attendants. There, too, was Swinburne and William Morris, William Michael and Theodore Watts amongst critics. There, were Dr. Hake, and William Bell Scott poet and painter; both Westland and Philip Bourke Marston, and others. This was no mean circle of genius and talent, intercourse with which must have been stimulative to a degree.

Some three years after his entrée to this charmed circle, O'Shaughnessy married Eleanor, a daughter of Westland

Marston. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy was both witty and talented, and in collaboration with her husband, she wrote and published a prose work for children entitled "Toyland." She died in 1879, and two years later, in the opening month of 1881, O'Shaughnessy himself died at the early age of 36, after a brief illness.

When in the year 1897 the late Mr. Palgrave issued the second series of his "Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics," more than one critic deprecated Mr. Palgrave's judgment in including no less than 17 of O'Shaughnessy's lyrics, in what might be considered the country's leading anthology.

In his notes to the volume, Mr. Palgrave boldly states, that in his opinion, O'Shaughnessy's, after Tennyson's, seemed to be the finest metrical gift of our later poets, and that he has a haunting music all his own; this and other words of high appreciation. He further refers to him as "that hardly known poet," and as meeting, with William Barnes, "the least due recognition of their eminent powers."

That O'Shaughnessy has not altogether received his due is an opinion that other critics have endorsed. It is known that there exists in writing to-day highly commendatory lines—in reference to his poetry—from Dante Rossetti, and Browning, and that abroad his work had extorted the admiration of such men as Victor Hugo, Gautier, and François Coppée.

O'Shaughnessy's first book, the "Epic of Women," was published in 1870, he then being but 26 years of age. It was somewhat remarkably illustrated by his friend I. T. Nettleship, and bore a simple dedication to his then chiefest friend, the poet John Payne. A second edition was early called for. The Epic is a collection of some half-dozen disconnected poems of unequal length, and

varying metrical form, and the volume is completed with a number of miscellaneous poems.

Of the seven themes composing the "Epic of Women," the longest, the one entitled "The Daughter of Herodias," is the best. It is not open to the same objection that applies to more than one of the others, viz.: that the unity and weight of interest is centred, not in woman, but in man, though it be an "Epic of Women." In "The Daughter of Herodias," she, the daughter, is the very focus of all its passion, power, and movement.

It is written in seven-line stanzas of iambic pentameter, excepting that in the latter portion, the third and the last lines are replaced with iambics of only three feet.

The poem is sustained and creative, and produces a vivid effect upon the imagination, the alteration in the number of feet in the latter portion, making the melody more rhythmic and pronounced.

The two characters depicted are John the Baptist and Salome, the daughter of the infamous Herodias.

O'Shaughnessy depicts John the Baptist as the mystic having visions in the wilderness, both of the far past and of the future, and experiencing an actual communion with the unseen world not, perhaps, intrinsically impossible. A young man, and well favoured. Here is he in a single stanza:

Nathless there grew and stayed upon his face
The wonderful unconquerable grace
Of a young man made beautiful with love;
Because the thought of God was wholly spread
Like love upon it; and still fair above
All crowned heads of kings remained his head
Whereon the halo of the Lord was shed.

The theme is a dramatic scene, and perhaps the affinities of it required that he should be young and beautiful. However, it is the picture of Salome that is pre-eminent

and particularly interesting. She stands out as clearly defined and as coloured and life-like, as in a cinematograph without the diminishment.

Without relinquishing in her all womanliness, nor spoiling her of the attractiveness of the young woman ; without withholding a free admiration of her beauty and dissembling sweetness ; fully approving her oriental sinuosity and suppleness of body and limb when dancing ; giving her ample credit for all these, she is yet the very re-incarnation of the damnable viciousness of her family, and with added powers. Indeed, O'Shaughnessy has felt it necessary to people the banqueting hall with invisible devils, an atmosphere of devils, so to speak.

The great fault in the piece lies in assigning to Salome an inordinately long monologue, where vivid action and whirling movement are its acute elements. Yet are those same stanzas so cunningly executed, as to make Salome afford us a marvellous self-depicted character-delineation. The sensuous and amorous words flow easily and naturally, not startling by their frank debasement, though it is there, nor repelling by utter vulgarity, but flowing speciously, seductively, as from a beautiful woman-devil.

The most forceful of the other themes, in our opinion, is that entitled "The Wife of Hephæstus," a resetting of the classical story from the Odessy, of the love of Mars and Venus. But its chief interest is not the wife, but Hephæstus, a man of nerve and of strength, as strong in passion and feeling as in muscle, and as much under control of his volition. In the rude strength of this character, and in the sturdy, even aggressive, assertion of the man-principle in the face of illimitable power, O'Shaughnessy has set forth powerfully and in an illumined way, a creation of no mean order. Not that mere strength of body or even of character makes highest appeal to us, but these

balanced and graced with the ability to be tender and magnanimous; and in Hephæstus we have a man capable of so strong a love, that it could compass a full forgiveness, when, for a man to forgive he must indeed be humbled by love like unto a child.

We have not quoted from either of these two themes, for their success does not lie other than in their delineation as a whole, of character, passion, and feeling, and in its movement; they are melodiously limned, and unite dramatic and lyrical force in rhythmic speech with the unity of impression and vividness received through pictorial art.

In the two parts of "Cleopatra," we have quieter studies of human character. Cleopatra, typical of the daring, the sensuousness and passion, typical even of the brute force of the East, as of a magnificent tigress; Antony, much the same sensuousness and outward glitter, but allied with a decadent emasculated power divorced from the nobler strenuousness and endeavour of other days. Yet Cleopatra is but a picture, and scarcely lives for us in these pages, or but for a moment as in these two quatrains:—

And lo! to mark more than any other feast
And honour Antony—or for mere pride
To do so proud a vanity, at least
The proudest vainest woman ever tried—

She took the unmatched pearl and taking, laughed,
And when they served her now that wine of worth
She cast it gleaming in; then with the draught
Mingling she drank it in their midst with mirth.

But it is in the character delineation of Antony the chief merit is found. It is subtle and analytic, and he stands before us the utter ruin of a noble and large moulded man, strangely craven and indifferent to all else but the one whirling eddy of passion in which his decadent days and moments are spent, exhibiting that dogged faithfulness to

the worthless queen, which was in reality founded upon his better nature. He moves our sympathy in that even at his worst there is some conflict between the better and the worse part of his nature.

"Helen of Troy" is a memorable item in this septet of themes. It is a study in psychology, full of human interest. It is the song of the Eden of a human heart, despoiled by sin, of a harking back over saddened years in the "moonlight of memory" to days and scenes, and a life and love, no longer possible, nay, no more possible than the innocence and spontaneity of one's youth.

The title of the "Epic of Women" is a misnomer. It is not an epic of woman, *sui generis*, it is scarcely an epic of women at all. It were truer, though less æsthetic, and inadmissible to entitle it "An Epic of Certain Women and Certain Men."

It is strong in characterization, and, no less, in parts, in imaginative power. It is creative, and yet it is inferior to the same effort in pure dramatic form, for we miss the play of one character upon another. Excepting Salome, and, in a much less degree Helen, the rest of the women-characters are pictures or phases, but Salome is whole, personal, and living.

All the themes flow with a full and pronounced rhythm, and the interest of the reader is not only aroused but sustained. We should have preferred an "Epic of Women" that were more generally acceptable as types, the whole making one great song of womanhood, but perhaps that were too much to ask, but we do think it to be a real objection that in these themes, where woman is the subject, it is the sex that is adhered to, rather than that side of human nature which God created in Woman as the complement of Man.

The Epic, too, is not without some false notes. We

can't in these days, in dealing with the Creation of Woman, depict in a serious piece the birth of woman as the offspring of "Pure coral with pearl engendering," and there is a falsetto in the would-be-poetical phraseology of such a line as

Full of sea-savours beautiful and good,

and there is even a perniciousness in the reference to newly-created woman as, for a period, God's leman. No refinement of meaning can make such words as "leman" pass in such a connection, and we flout the closing suggestion in "Creation" that woman was created soulless and false.

We pass now to other items in this volume. How strongly the lyrical faculty was developed in this young man of 26, and coupled with what wonderful sympathy and tenderness, is evidenced by the lyric entitled "The Fountain of Tears." It can fairly be read and compared with that one of De Quincey's pieces of impassioned prose in his "Suspiria," entitled "Levana and our Ladies of Sorrow." The theme is essentially simple and tender, and O'Shaughnessy's treatment thereof will appeal to all who have known sadness and sorrow. Here is the opening stanza and another:—

If you go over desert and mountain,
Far into the country of sorrow,
To-day and to night and to-morrow,
And maybe for months and for years;
You shall come, with a heart that is bursting
For trouble and toiling and thirsting,
You shall certainly come to the fountain
At length—to the Fountain of Tears.

And it flows and it flows with a motion
So gentle and lovely and listless,
And murmurs a tune so resistless
To him who hath suffered and hears—

You shall surely—without a word spoken,
Kneel down there and know your heart broken,
And yield to the long curb'd emotion
That day by the Fountain of Tears.

The final stanza is a fitting conclusion, and leaves us with a sense of restfulness and even content.

But the floods of the tears meet and gather ;
The sound of them all grows like thunder :
—O into what bosom, I wonder,
Is poured the whole sorrow of years ?
For Eternity only seems keeping
Account of the great human weeping :
May God then, the Maker and Father—
May He find a place for the Tears !

There is a benignity and nobleness in this lyric characteristic of true poetry. It has in it a gentle and a low-sounding music most soothing to the heart, since it so freely acknowledges that in the great economy of human nature, there is a place for tears, and a time when tears shall not only be right, but even wise. The poem has the running lilt of anapestic verse, but the execution is most felicitous, and the sense of a galloping rhythm is cleverly subdued to the temper of the piece. We do not wonder that this has been included in most anthologies, or that it has, in common with some of his other lyrics, been translated into other languages.

The poetic temperament is acclaimed as one of keen sensibility, and its subject is at times conscious of what Obermann speaks of, as a "sensibility beyond utterance, the charm and torment of our vain years, a vast consciousness of a nature everywhere greater than we are, and everywhere impenetrable."

This sensibility was evidently very keenly felt at times by O'Shaughnessy towards a life above and beyond this—perhaps in him a glimmer of supra-consciousness—so that we are not surprised to find expressions of a mild yet cer-

tain mysticism, not only in this but subsequent volumes.

It is seen in his piece "Seraphitus"—of strange ethereal calm.

A spirit from a Zone
Of light and ecstasy and psalm

one whom we seem to apprehend—though surely, yet dimly, and as through some diaphonous medium, or as the face and form of one seen in the mystic's crystal; Seraphitus, the subject of "many a yearning, vague but intense."

In the stanzas entitled "The Lover," this mysticism is more pronounced, it permeates them all, though perhaps nowhere directly illustrating it.

The lover's self is imperceptible and invisible rather than absent, always by, yet always by one short step eluding contact or vision, whose presence the loved one is always conscious of in some mystical way; and this lover is set forth as God. This again illustrates a certain unwelcome daring in O'Shaughnessy in relation to the Deity. We spoke of his use of the word *leman*, and we go further and say that we doubt the fitness of setting forth the love of God towards any human heart in the ordinary terms of love-speech between the sexes.

The same characteristic obtains in one of his most imaginative and striking poems, that entitled "Bis-clavaret," where the poem would suggest God as the Creator of marred or cursed spirits, created as such. There is, however, a vigour and Dantesque picturesqueness and imaginative power in this poem which wholly redeems it. The effect too is partly attained by suggestion that first art of poetry, which, according to Ruskin, "informs us not, it does better, it kindles the imagination."

Two years after the appearance of the "Epic of Women" he published his volume "The Lays of France," founded upon the "Laies of Marie," one of the old French MSS.

in the Bodleian Library. It is doubtful if the "Lays of France" could satisfy all the hopes which might fairly be based upon his "Epic of Women." The lyrical power is there to the full, but at its best in the brief preludes and epilogues to each lay; the lays themselves are frequently too spun out to permit of his highest level of excellence being sustained. Still, the volume contains some of his best work, and was his most sustained effort.

These Lays are five in number, and love is the theme of them all, but in how varied a setting!

Let us say at once, that being sung in modern literary English, they have lost one great advantage. They deal with old-time stories, and we sorely miss the quaint flavour of old-time phrasing and diction, not impossible to reproduce, as witness Mr. Lang's "Aucassin and Nicolette." Indeed these lays need (in view of modern thought and feeling) all the glamour they thus could have received at O'Shaughnessy's hands. They have a certain quality of being unmoral, partly in incident, partly in treatment. In contemplating these lays we find ourselves constantly having to face the suggestion that there exists, or may or should exist, a system of ethics and morality peculiarly pertaining to—shall we say—high-class lovers. A race of superlative souls, rare and of high origin, elect, transcendent, who love with such overmastering and single adherence to it, that it knows no law but its own imperious high necessities. A love not subject to the canons of our mundane morality, to ethics co-ordinated for imperfect human nature, not subject thereto, and therefore not to be judged by them. Here is a seeming justification of feminine frailty by adherence to such a position. It is taken from the opening lay, the lay of an unfaithful wife:—

No man can otherwise abide
In life, but love must enter in;

This thing—do what she would—God knew
 She could not help with all her care,
 Nor change, for love will have his due.

The following lines are from another lay, and these, too,
 are written of an illicit love :—

O what like love can cure the ill
 Of love? That moment overthrew
 All timorous thinking, and they knew
 Henceforth for ill no sort of name
 But death; for all the world became
 Their own.

The heroine of the salacious novel of the last decade of
 the 19th century is one who in her own conceit overthrows
 "all timorous thinking," and finds death the only ill.

What this kind of cult leads to, even in its expression
 only, is evidenced by these three stanzas selected from the
 poem of "The Lay of the Two Lovers":

O love, where is the bed we made
 In scented wood-ways for sweet sin?
 The sun was with us and the shade;
 The warm blue covered us in.
 All men their curse on us had laid—
 Finding had slain us both therein;
 But, summer with us, not afraid
 Were we to love and sin.
 The hard one never found our lair :—
 We were not slain, love—we are fair,
 And love, ay, as we loved before:
 —Let us go back once more!

We have given some prominence to this aspect
 of O'Shaughnessy, as it is more or less apparent through
 all his work, and may, to some extent, account for some
 of the neglect to which we have referred.

We have said that the theme of these lays was one and
 solitary—love. O'Shaughnessy is primarily and eminently
 a singer of love, and love in many aspects.

These were the themes of the *trouvère* and the *trouba-*

dour, and in such themes has O'Shaughnessy here built his strength.

Take these lines on the heart of Woman. After singing the praises of the sky, the light, the sea, the rose, he sings in a tenderness not unmixed with a chivalric reverence—

But now—a fairer jewel yet—
In every woman He hath set
Her heart, some sort of precious stone;
He shall know perfectly alone
—Who all the stars of Heaven can tell—
The worth and number of them all.

Most are they given away, or sold
For so much love or so much gold,
Yea, no man knoweth of their cost;
But well I ween that some are lost,
And some are of small worth I say,
And some are broken and cast away.

It is the fairest thing you can
Ladies, to give this to a man
—This precious jewel that God gave:
One such is all a man may crave.

We have made reference to the high excellence of the lyrics preluding these lays. We quote samples selected from two of them of similar theme. The simple humility and pathos of these lines need no enforcement:—

I went to her who loveth me no more,
And prayed her bear with me, if so she might,
For I had found day after day too sore,
And tears that would not cease night after night.
And so I prayed her, weeping, that she bore
To let me be with her a little, yea,
To sooth myself a little with her sight
Who loved me once, ah many a night and day.

For after all I find no chain whereby
To chain her heart to love me as before,
Nor fetter for her lips to make them cease
From saying still she loveth me no more.

And these exquisite lines, in different measure :—

Has summer come without the rose,
 Or left the bird behind?
 Is the blue changed above thee
 O world? or am I blind?
 Will you change every flower that grows,
 Or only change this spot—
 Where she who said, I love thee,
 Now says I love thee not?

The skies seemed true above thee;
 The rose true on the tree;
 The bird seemed true the summer through;
 But all proved false to me:
 World, is there one good thing in you—
 Life, love, or death—or what?
 Since lips that sang I love thee
 Have said I love thee not?

We have cursorily touched upon some of the characteristics of these lays, but to do them justice they must be reviewed at length. This is especially the case with that one entitled "Chaitivel," of which lay no due appreciation of its imaginative power, its unique conception, its dramatic force, and in places its delicate handling, could be conveyed without more space being devoted to it than we can spare. Yet it is all there, and this theme in particular is marvellously framed, and as a study it would be most fascinating. It constitutes some of his best work.

This volume of lays also ran into a second edition, and doubtless this warranted O'Shaughnessy in publishing, in 1874, his third volume, entitled "Music and Moonlight." It appeared shortly after his marriage. Seven years later, in 1881, he died, and without having again published in volume form.

In this volume "Music and Moonlight," his lyrical power is strongly represented, and therein is, still, the modest pantheism and half-pronounced dualism of his former

work, and all the old supremacy of love, with its touch of mysticism, and, too, the strain of (as we think) premonitory sadness, yet is there also an added note. It is a growing interest in the welfare of man and a widening sympathy with man as the worker, coupled with its natural concomitant, an optimism which was gradually replacing the pessimism of former days.

This optimistic note is sounded in the opening ode, the which latter is significantly placed before the epic giving title to the volume. This ode has a personal note in it too, and it is always interesting to know something of what such a man thinks of himself.

It is the poem of a poet, both as Creator and Destroyer, and even more assuredly, as the Prophet.

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams.

(Yet) we are the movers and shakers,
Of the world for ever, it seems.

One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown ;
And three with a song's new measure
Can trample a kingdom down.

As indeed the "Marsellaise" did sufficiently aid in doing.
There is a conscious pride in his craft in this stanza—

But we, with our dreaming and singing,
Careless and sorrowless we !
The glory about us clinging
Of the glorious futures we see,
Our souls with high music ringing :
O Men ! it must ever be
That we dwell, in our dreaming and singing,
A little apart from ye.

Yet is this elation, matched by a succeeding note of pathetic humility, as he cries to the coming singers of a New Era—

You shall teach us your songs new numbers,
 And things that we dreamed not before :
 Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers,
 And a singer who sings no more.

The stanzas entitled "Europe," and those entitled "An Ode to a New Age," and indeed others, form the song of one who, with open mind, is ready to cling to almost any new faith broad and deep enough to enfold his vision of a more glorious day.

On the other hand, if we take "Europe" as an ode of the millenium, it is, upon examination, found too discursive and unequal. Its verve and passion is, as it were, spread on the surface of large tracts, rather than permeating it whole, nor is it wholly free from former pessimism, since O'Shaughnessy does not stand far enough back from the events of his day, the which in relation to his poor France at least, weigh too heavily upon him.

But the redeeming salt is his felt assurance of the certainty that the day will break when man will rise triumphing over evil, nay, that now, even to-day, were we possessors of Aladdin's power, and listened, we should hear amid the throng and march of many million common feet, the steady tread of earth's heroes, one here, one there, whose life and effort, whose song and faith, would make possible the dawn of that golden age "to which the whole Creation moves."

It is well voiced in these imaginative lines descriptive of the dawn of day :—

Nay, by yon pink of slowly parting lips,
 A long rim near the dawn, a broken sight
 Of blown-up flames, and tongues of fire that leap
 And feast already on the fringe of night,
 Singeing her very footsteps in the deep ;—
 Nay, by the thrones upon the steadfast tops
 Of mountains, where the light already reigns.

The very winds are still at nights
 Waiting, and leaves are whispering of thee
 All day; and in the forest stirs a thunder
 Fitfully, as of armies drawing near,
 Distinctly as of hoofs and tramp of steeds;
 And echoes bring far round of clarions clear:
 Yea, all the world is full of hope and wonder:
 Hail to the men and honour to the deeds!
 Men that shall be, and deeds that shall be done.

The poem giving title to this volume is a rhapsody, making no appeal to reason, but O'Shaughnessy, with a true touch of genius in the manner of it, closes it in a tragedy, coming naturally as though nature had exacted her due penalty for the incursion into the supra-sensuous.

It needs the transforming alchemy of the true imaginative poet ere "thoughts lone rhapsody" can achieve that "immortal madness" which is the rhapsody's warrant. Music formed the means of this incursion, "music that the world hath no speech for," and to this he added the colouring of an oriental mythology; and the dead, broken heart at the close, saves us from having to return to the world whence we started, saves us from—a recoil. It is a difficult theme, and only poetic phrenzy could make it credible to one's feelings even; and that O'Shaughnessy should have succeeded, in any measure, is perhaps saying much.

The piece has its faults, and one serious one too, in that the introduction is redolent of modern conventionalities, almost puerile, and certainly spoiling the mind's receptivity for what follows, as such a setting must do, mixed with such commonplaces as "unutterable nothings," "softened lightning," "all the girls." But this introduction once left behind, there is no return to these levels and of Lady Eucharis (the subject of the incursion into the mystical) we half believe

C

Lone memories of delicious days
 Fell like balm upon her
 until
 pleasure came in tears
 And her soul lived above life's days and years.

We cannot refrain from quoting these two triplets from the Aloe's song; they speak for themselves :—

If thou wilt never tire
 But in all thy song aspire
 Divine shall throb thy lyre.
 If through all dreary grieving,
 Thy soul went on believing,
 Bright shall be thine achieving.

All true poets are something of philosophers, but all are not equally speculative. O'Shaughnessy has his speculative side, sometimes daringly so, but always is his speculation catholic in its sympathies, and with special regard for love.

More purely speculative is the poem "The Disease of the Soul." Life prolonged over many generations is the theme, a metrical offset of the legend of the "Wandering Jew." Spoken of such prolonged life, is prefixed this couplet, excellent alike in accent and quantity :—

O exquisite malady of the Soul,
 How hast thou marred me!

The theme fascinates by its strange interest, and, so to speak, peculiar couching.

One would expect some cynicism in the outlook of one whose every point of contact with this world is warped by the influences of an inordinately long experience of men and things. And cynicism is there, bitter yet not unsympathetic.

Terrestrial phenomena in some of their more awe-full aspects, O'Shaughnessy was always deeply impressed with, and is always happy in his relation of them. In the

"Song of the Holy Spirit," is a notable instance, written in reference to the advent of the Holy Spirit to earth.

A momentary wonder
Seemed passing in the world : the long bushed eve
Glowed purple, and the awed soul of the thunder
Lay shuddering in the distance ; and the heave
Of great unsolaced seas over and under
The tremulous earth was heard with them to grieve.

This attribution of the "Humanities" to Mother Earth is very striking, and even more striking the picture of the seas heaving in the unrest of unsolaced sympathy with the grief of human hearts.

Of the short songs in this volume we quote but one, a fair sample of them all. It is the threnody of a love wounded in the innermost part of it. Though there are broken metres in it, and it does not wholly satisfy the ear, it yet has its full meed of passion and pathos, and has a large-souled magnanimity that reaches to the root of feeling.

She has gone wandering, wandering away ;
Very sad madness hath taken her to-day.
Would I might hold her by her hair's golden mass,
By her two feet, her girdle, her whole self in the glass
Of the years past, that change not, though she change and stray,
For twain were we no more, to love and to pass ;
For she hath both our heavens, and God heard her say
Fair oaths that but curse both for ever, if, alas !
She hath gone wandering away.

Shall not some memory—nothing I can say—
Soon or late plead with her more than I pray ?
Shall not some song, more than my singing hath ?
Yea, O God ! let me find her, though dying in the grass ;
Ere she die let me hold her, and forget how to-day
She hath gone wandering away.

The volume entitled "Songs of a Worker," was published posthumously by O'Shaughnessy's literary executor, the Rev. A. W. Newport Deacon. We do not feel that it

adds much to his fame, still there are items contained in it which it would be a real loss to be without. Mr. Deacon tells us that most of its items were written during the two years of life which remained to O'Shaughnessy after his wife's decease. Hence it is, probably, that the tone of sadness already noted in his previous work, became at once deepened, and, if we may so put it, more wholesome, or more mellow. It never became soured—there was too much of the pulse of life in O'Shaughnessy for that—rather did sorrow temper it.

Sincere enough, doubtless, was the expression of his grief at the loss of his wife. We listen with a sympathy which is the echo in our own hearts to this pathetic plaint :—

I carry in my soul the loss of her,
A grief past words and tears ; when these are o'er,
Speechless I can but send you to some shore
Lone, desolate, to sit there and confer
With the immense sea weeping evermore,
To know the inward weeping of my soul,
A flood no calms can soothe, no tides control.

This volume, "Songs of a Worker," evidences a more pronounced sympathy with man as the Worker, and O'Shaughnessy's literary executor is right in his selection of the title. Personal themes, though not absent, are much less frequent, also old-time enchantments are quite different in character. The title-piece—"Song of a Fellow Worker"—has its pronounced humility and fellowship penned by the same hand that wrote

O men, it must ever be
That we dwell in our dreaming and singing
A little apart from ye !

The piece named is somewhat in the style of Charles Mackay. Easy to read and understand ; no attempt at ornate expression or high metaphor, but a plain, pleasing

song of the inward nobleness of labour, and of the bond of common service, which, if all be truly done, binds the artist and the henchman.

The same democratic sympathy finds voice in the piece entitled "Christ will return."

It is a cry for applied Christianity, and its scathing and irony (of which there is much) is not without meaning to-day.

Of the several pieces collected under the sub-title, "Thoughts in Marble," O'Shaughnessy remarks, in anticipatory defence, that his object was gained if in them he had kept strictly within the lines assigned to the sculptor's art; "an art," he says, "I have yet failed to perceive includes either morality or immorality," and he disclaims the dictum "Art for Art," in favour of "Art for Humanity."

These poems of form were intended to repeat in parallel, creations of art following the limitations of the sensuous, and in a measure repeating the nudities, art permits to the sculptor. But O'Shaughnessy scarcely observes these limitations, broad as they are. Perhaps the parallel was not quite a natural one. He added indeed to the sculptor's art in that he sought to warm his Pygmalion into life, to endow his creations with life while preserving their correlation with the attributes of form, beauty, truth, and sense.

These poems of form would seem to inculcate that the worship of art and the ideallic in form and the beautiful, is ennobling and healing. True, but we opine not the whole truth.

Of the imaginative side of these "Songs of Marble," we briefly refer to one instance from that entitled "Carrara."

That which is ultimately the creation of the Sculptor's Art, his concept, is pictured as enshrined in the marble, the latter still within its matrix—the sometime molten

earth; whence, purified, the marble is raised to light and day. Now the rough-cut block is under the artist's hands, and, enshrined in the heart of that marble, is the conscious maiden, the concept of the artist's imagination. It is as though she speaks

I am the bride
Who clings with terror, suppliant and pale,
And fears the lifting of her virgin veil
Because the shrinking form, spite of her prayers
Has grown to know its earthliness, and bears
The names of sins that gave up shameful ghosts
On antique crosses.

We think this is unique as well as an imaginative theme.

The last piece we shall consider is not one of these poems of form. It is a piece comparable in some measure with Longfellow's "Hiawatha." Its title is "Colibri." It is in pentameter, with rhyming couplets for the most part, but sometimes the rhymes are discursive.

The piece illustrates O'Shaughnessy both at his best and his worst. It is wordy, and, as it were, the flesh of a poem, but structureless, or at least boneless and limp. The framework is too slender, and does not suffice to afford the piece the dignity pertaining to a creation. On the other hand, he has successfully put forward the assigned mystical side of Nature with that (in this connection) commendable indefiniteness that largely escapes contention, and yet carries some conviction. It is done with just that bloom of colour which makes it, if not acceptable, yet tolerable. If done grossly we should reject it at once, but Nature so interpreted by a master, even a sceptic might approve.

The poem's chief strength lies in its varied and imaginative description of tropical nature, and yet, coming to the emotions, we see and half love "Colibri" at first sight.

that child
Seemed a sweet wonder. Strange and wild
From the first years she grew, as one

With superhuman secrets, things
 Unspeakable ; who oft must shun
 Her people for far communings ;
 Having unclouded sight and clues
 Of swift ways to an unknown land
 Past all the trials their feet might use.
 A spell they could not understand
 Was with her that she did begin
 To move unwontedly their hearts,
 And there was nought she might not win
 With her charmed smile and lovely arts.

" Colibri's " union with Nature is marvellous and mystical, an intense intuition of her secret side, and a close relation to the outer world of animal and vegetable life.

There is an agreeable and mild pantheism throughout these cantos. For instance, to quote :—

We linger, feeling what the waters feel,
 And what the flowers are faint with, and a throng
 Of passionate thought goes mingling with the song
 Of low-voiced love-birds, 'till we join the dream
 Of all their emerald Eden. Nothing said
 Around, beneath, or answered overhead,
 Yet all one soul in one effusion seem
 The opulent odours, the transcendent gleam,
 The radiant heights of verdure—the cool gloom,
 The flowering orgies of unwonted bloom,
 The love, the thought—one soul, one dream, one doom.

Here and there are thoughts that reach the heart's passion, and afford the piece the approbation, perforce, of human interest. Take this vigorous couplet—

In truth, to work out with a fearful might
 Myself mine own unmitigated hell.

It reminds one of Gabriel Rossetti's sonnet "Lost Days," that magnificent sonnet closing thus :—

I am thyself—what hast thou done to me ?
 And I—and I—thyself (lo each one saith)
 And thou thyself to all eternity.

Compare this description of the brief twilight and sudden descent of night in the tropics with Coleridge's.

The latter in "The Ancient Mariner," paints it thus:—

The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark.

O'Shaughnessy's lines are:—

So the tremendous evening fades, and night
Like a great noiseless eagle, at one flight
Covers the glowing country of the light.

Both striking, both good, and if we realize more fully in Coleridge the resultant dark, in O'Shaughnessy we realize more fully that great glow upon which the darkness fell. If anything we think O'Shaughnessy has the advantage in naturalness in his reference to the suddenness of the phenomenon, as of the oncoming and overshadowing of an eagle, whereas, there is in Coleridge's lines perhaps just a suggestion of magic-lantern celerity. The subdued element of danger suggested by the eagle, is, too, not wholly foreign to the thought of dark night, and helps the fullness of O'Shaughnessy's description.

Nevertheless, despite its "purple patches," there is a lack of homogenousness and unity in "Colibri" which leaves the reader with a sense of being unsatisfied, a feeling that it reaches a level just short of something great.

O'Shaughnessy is "par excellence" a lyricist of love, his theme is not exclusively love, nor his poetic form solely lyrical, but chiefly is he "un chanteur d'amour."

It is mainly by his lyrics that he will live. His lyrical power was both inborn and developed, and though no equal of Herrick or Shelley, yet is he in some measure fairly comparable with both. Milton has said that "true poetry should be simple, sensuous, and impassioned," and these qualities are freely present in O'Shaughnessy. But it should be this, and we think also something more. That

something more Matthew Arnold calls "high seriousness," and if O'Shaughnessy be lacking, it is on that side. Aristotle says that poetry is more serious and more philosophical even than history, because it deals with universal truth, and we imagine that O'Shaughnessy was too limited in his appreciation of universal truth.

Yet, while his poems are in a degree limited, temperamentally, in regard to universal truth, they also gain by that same cause, in passion, in sensuousness, and in a measure, in simplicity. This is especially true we think of the lyrics, where, as a rule, a single idea is, to use Henley's phrase, "expressed in terms of poetry." Not that all his work has the characteristic of simplicity. Often enough only by most careful consideration and analysis, do you arrive at an estimate of some of his effusions, so metaphysical and transcendental, and at times, so involved and ambiguous are they. Nor do we think that in any wise is he the poet for the dilettante; he aims too high for that. Throughout almost all his work is frequent instance of a delicate and refined imagery, often exquisitely gracing it, and affording a subtle pleasure. It adds much to his lyrical gift. One instance may be quoted in three lines:—

The lovely blossom of that woman's face
Bore fading out in many a tender trace,
Pale flowery legends of love's glowing wonder!

Was ever the past writ on one's face by the hand of Time, so sweetly and delicately told? Noteworthy in itself the fullness of that line—

Pale flowery legends of love's glowing wonder.

Though we find that O'Shaughnessy's main strength lies in his lyrical power, and find it simple, sensuous, and impassioned, yet is it accompanied and discounted by a correlative weakness. O'Shaughnessy is characteristically

wordy. Wordy (if we may be excused that faulty but expressive phrase), not in the sense of being given to pedantry, but to the drawn out use of words and diction of poetical flavour and "linked sweetness." Love lore, love-lilt, and love dalliance and diction, so enthrall him and enslave his pen, that page after page of emasculated theme, at times, ensues. Perhaps this overstates the case somewhat, and we might be nearer the mark if we but named our sighing for more virility, more grit, more of what Carlyle terms "the inner sternness of truth" — Bishop Pecoek's "doom of reason." Hence O'Shaughnessy offers little towards the solution of the problems of life. His poems may evince a "Vesture of an infinite palpitating essence," but, for the most part, there is no sufficient stir to energy.

Further, we find it impossible to claim for O'Shaughnessy that he is a poet of his day and generation in the sense that he has held the mirror up to them, as did Chaucer and Shakspeare. His interest dwelt not inconsiderably in things past, and too, in things foreign, both in clime and environment.

Nevertheless, the very inwardness and aspiration of many of his other themes distinguishes him from the mere tyro either as poetaster or thinker. We may question his views and have done, we never question but that he has the accent of sincerity. His temperament is suffused through his poems, they are part of himself, as he thought and felt.

This leads us to remark the almost complete absence of humour in his work; it is as completely absent as it is from Spencer's "Fairie Queene," or Milton's "Paradise Lost." O'Shaughnessy's temperament in that respect found no poetic vent, though no doubt it had its modifying influence.

We feel sure Shelley shared with the French Roman-cists, and perhaps Swinburne, the chief external influence over O'Shaughnessy's work, both in its character and form. It is remarked that he was keenly in sympathy with the musical form and genius of Chopin. We can believe it, and suspect a parallel here. We have been told that Chopin's compositions are "the champagne of the musical vintage," and that he thrills us with the passion and sparkle and evanescent tingle which pervade his waltzes and nocturnes. O'Shaughnessy has much of this, but there is an added mellowed sadness, a pathos, a minor key; yet one, free on the whole, from either gloom or sombreness.

We have purposely refrained from attempting to deal with the measures used and affected by O'Shaughnessy, and his schemes of rhymes. There is, we believe, originality in both, often enough eminently musical, varied, and commendable, plus not a little faulty and even careless work.

We have thus endeavoured to draw some attention back to a neglected poet of our own day. It is said his work is better known in America and Paris than in his own country. Perhaps for the English public to do him needful justice it were necessary that a wise selection of his best work be published in one or two volumes. If this were done, we feel sure that they could contain merit enough, and sufficient possibilities of pleasure for the reader, to induce him to reserve them no out-of-the-way corner in his private library. As long as romance and love and song bring relief to the heavier aspects of life, so long O'Shaughnessy should find his place in our regard, both the Singer and his Song.





THE EVOLUTION OF THE ESSAY.

BY W. V. BURGESS.

NO scientific dictum has so profoundly altered the bases of human thought, or modified the common beliefs of men, as has the theory of Evolution. The application of this discovery to the elucidation of the, hitherto, inscrutable mysteries of man's whence, where, and whither, has brought us immeasurably nearer the solution of the great problems of human origin and destiny. This theory of the genesis of all natural phenomena is not restricted in its application to the world of "matter" simply, but holds just as potently in the realm of "mind." Mental evolution follows the same laws as physical evolution, there is no discontinuity between the gradually perfecting processes acting upon the corporeal and those at work upon the mind. Progress in one direction implies corresponding advance in the other. This fact is the prophylactic which operates against any one-sided interpretation of the great theme of Evolution.

Proceeding upon this understanding, I need not offer any excuse for applying the principles of evolution in tracing the orderly development of the Essay in the field of literature.

An essay is an attempt to prove, explain, or treat of, in a more or less brief form, any particular topic of special

or general interest. It reflects public opinion or moulds it, as the case may be. It praises and blames, theorizes, dogmatizes, and ridicules, according to the mood or conviction of the writer. It deals mainly with some current question, and thus becomes part of the process of national growth. It is essentially the outcome of civilisation, social habit, science, and education. Its origin is, therefore, posterior to that of poetry, romance, or polemics, and must be sought in later times, when knowledge had more equalized the minds of men and created the necessity for channels of topical expression, which neither poetry nor theology were capable of supplying.

The golden age of Elizabethan literature followed upon the effusions of bardic troubadours, the Chaucerian school, and the controversies of ecclesiasticism. Thought was leavened with new ideas, men were dominated by great conceptions and exalted ambitions, but the iron rule of the Tudors repressed the natural simplicity of literary form through which these impulses might have been expressed, and compelled, conventionally at all events, such expressions to assume a dramatic garb or to be obscured by pedantic conceits. Nevertheless, during this illustrious period we shall find the embryonic elements, if not of form, at least of that temper of mind which pervades the typical essay. Literature remained no longer an oligarchy, it had become a republic in whose freer air the essay, as such, was already becoming a possibility.

Perhaps one of the chief factors which brought about the transition, or rather the interfusion, of scholastic conventionalities, in form and idea, with popular subjects and natural expression, was the introduction of the Newspaper. "The English Mercurie" appeared simultaneously with the Spanish Armada, and thus would consequently suffer nothing from lack of striking *copy*. It is curious to note,

too, that at about this time the father of the famous essayist, Montaigne, was establishing in France those advertisement-sheets which afterwards developed into the French Newspaper.

The story of the gradual evolution of middle-class society in this country is the story of the evolution of the English Essay. The *nouveau riche* sought to be amused as well as instructed, and though English literature had never before been so full of power and resource, it was not until the advent of Steele and Addison that the peculiar mental condition of the newly-arisen public was gauged and catered for. Thus the essay gradually became a popular literary medium through which the foibles of society could be hit off, its follies satirised, its leisure filled, and those matters which agitated the social mind commented upon. The world of artificial culture, with its frills and ruffles, its scented dames and fashionable beaux, intermingled with the more serious strain born of puritanic austerity, provided an endless and varied scope for the art of the seventeenth and eighteenth century essayists.

Addison was doubtless the most brilliant essayist among those whose genius was fostered under such circumstances, circumstances which must alone explain the incongruous medley of topics upon which he exercised his pen. Side by side we find such widely-apart subjects as "Ladies' Head-dresses" and "Consolation in Death"; "The Hoop Petticoat" and "The Satires of Simonides"; "Dissection of a Coquette's Heart" and "Dispersion of the Jews." Yet out of these widely-separated topics arose that style in essay writing which is still held to be, within its limits, synonymous with what is best in sharp, polished, epigrammatic diction.

Towards the end of this period a great change slowly came over the public taste and spirit of England. At

home, the rights of man were receiving support from the pen of the theorist; abroad, the same end was being sought by the axe of the public executioner, or the severing of national allegiance. All human institutions were being shaken to their foundations, and were being remodelled in consonance with the requirements of an enlightened people. This epoch of stirring events gave a fresh impetus to our general literature, and marked a new era in the evolution of the essay.

The three most prominent essayists who were born during these turbulent times, and whose writings created the greatest interest in the early part of the present century, were Lamb, Hazlitt, and Hunt. Since the days of their illustrious predecessors of *Spectator* fame society had, as we have said, greatly changed in its general character. A far larger variety of subject matter, springing out of the more complex life of the people, awaited treatment at the hands of the essayist: and not only so, but the writer himself had an enormously increased audience at command. In consequence, it is not to be wondered at that the sphere of the essay became greatly extended, and its position in the general literature of the country permanently established.

So far the essay has been evolved *pari passu* with the growth of public interest in letters, the development of society characteristics, and the decline of an exclusive scholasticism. Henceforth, that is from the period which ushered in the three essayists already named, the evolution of the essay proceeds along slightly different lines. Society had existed long enough to have become self-conscious and critical, and to have become capable of understanding allusions to the accumulated wealth of thought and work contained in its own and other literature. Therefore, the essay, under these conditions, passes

beyond the necessity of having to appeal to primitive feelings, or to the satisfying of class conventionalities. Hence we find that the early eighteenth-century essayists deal with subjects hitherto entirely untouched; and not only so, but they deal with them according to the canons of true literary art. For the essay being neither a dissertation nor a thesis, must be artistically conceived and similarly executed. It must possess literary finish and logical coherence. Its case must be briefly stated and clearly expressed. Whether the subject be fanciful or practical, these conditions are absolutely essential for the essay's success. Analogically, the essay ought to bear the same relation to prose as the lyric bears to poetry.

The recognition of these rules, by writers of first rank, in connection with the essay, marks another distinct stage in its evolutionary development; while the application of these same rules in the production of the essay invest it with a dignity commensurate with its aims and objects. Towards this new dignity Lamb contributed no mean share. His humour and tenderness, his fancy and pathos, are qualities as manifest in his essays as his personal peculiarities were charmingly evident to his friends. In his essays on "Roast-Pig" and "Poor Relations" we have examples of that quaint fanciful humour which may be admitted in literary enterprise without detracting from literary form. In his "Genius and Character of Hogarth" and "Tragedies of Shakespeare" we find interpenetrated with truest criticism a vein of rhetorical richness and a sweet reasonableness which raise his subject above the plane of ungenerous bickerings. Thus we may say that Charles Lamb added to the possibilities of the essay the blending of grace, pathos, and humour.

Leigh Hunt, though not as great an agent in creating style or in introducing new subject-matter in the essay, as

some of his contemporaries, really did service by importing into his topics a cheerfulness and a gay wit which relieved the prosaic tendency of commonplace matters. He is optimistic and chatty, he adorns his subject with fancies culled from the remotest fields of thought. Considering that Hunt was a poet as well as an essayist, it might naturally be thought that his prose themes would have a poetic conception, but, apart from the "Death of Little Children," this is not his strong point. Under his treatment the essay has been brightened by pleasantries and ornamented by poetical and other quotations.

That Hazlitt had a distinct share in evolving the higher capabilities of the English essay is unquestionable. His feelings were strong and deep, his faculty robust and passionate, his style concise, sinewy, and finished. These are excellent literary adjuncts, and have exercised a formative influence on the style of many an able essayist of more recent days. Hazlitt, as a man or a writer, was not faultless, and perhaps his work is too autobiographical on the whole to be really great, yet there is a charm about it to which the English essay will for ever be indebted.

When at last Napoleon had been arrested in his singular mission of regenerating Europe by the sword, and England had settled down to the consideration of internal interests, social laws, and enfranchisement, in these quieter days, when most of the great literati of the preceding generation had either passed away or were resting like aged giants among their mighty works, then there arose a distinguished bevy of writers who were destined to add still greater lustre to the glory of our essay-literature. Foremost among these were Macaulay and Carlyle. The objects aimed at by these two authors, and their consummate skill and power, carried the essay still further along the upward grooves of its evolution. To wit, the avowed

intention of Carlyle was, primarily, to inform English readers respecting the thought and genius of German literature; and though this plan widened out so as to embrace other subjects, it illustrates the high estimation in which this master-mind held the essay as a medium through which the most stupendous truths might be conveyed. Under these influences the essay had grown worthy enough to express the ideas of the greatest modern thinkers, strong enough to bear the weight of the deepest human thought, and facile enough for the expression of every shade of experience of which mankind is cognisant.

Through Carlyle the essay became enriched by his majestic force of expression, which, though sometimes uncouth and grotesque, served as a fitting vehicle for his most ponderous thoughts. When dealing with philosophic problems he hurled about great fragments of thought with all the ease of a great genius, often showing rough jagged corners may be, but always preserving cogency and power. His biographical writings, however, must be considered the most readable of his works for ordinary minds, and his most valuable contribution to the essay, in relation to the evolution of its style and power. It is a long reach now between the airy diatribe and the scented quip of Addison and the sense of time and death and the brooding awfulness of Carlyle.

Lord Macaulay differed in almost every way from his great contemporary Carlyle. He literally splashed colour into every department of essay domain. Historical, critical, biographical, and literary subjects were all cast by him into such form of perfect proportion and expressed with such brilliant diction, decked with such pomp and splendour, and finished with such masterly skill, that it is safe to say the essay had never before received such a compound of happy potents from any school of writers as

it did from this one man. His essays carry the reader along as a part of an imposing triumphal procession. We are dazzled by the glittering insignia while we marvel at the vivified detail of circumstance. His biographical subjects are not often dealt with as they actually are, but as they appear to be against the setting of their surroundings. Thus, "Warren Hastings" is not more a description of the man than it is the story of British conquest in India. In his "Boswell's Life of Johnson" we become as intimately acquainted with Goldsmith and Garrick as we do with the real subject of the essay. This mode of treatment, which sets restrictive rules at defiance, we are not disposed to cavil at if exercised by so great a genius as Macaulay, for it widens the sphere and more ornately embellishes the style of what we may now consider the fully evolved essay.

During the full half century that has intervened between the zenith work of the essayists just mentioned and the present time, the essay has not lacked writers capable of maintaining and ever adding to its chaplet of well-earned laurels. No doubt the numberless reviews, quarterlies, and high-class monthlies of our own day must be credited with encouraging the variety of form and subject which is so marked a feature in the latest essay productions. Now that cheap literature has become as essential to the people's needs as cheap bread, there is indeed a danger that hurried, ill-thought matter dealing with popular manias and expressing spurious sentiment, may tend to drag down the high standard to which the essay has attained. Still there is hope in the other side of the question, that by the same medium the best literature of our day also finds its way among the people, and paves the way for that demand which asks for "People's editions" and inexpensive "reprints" of the best and strongest thews of modern minds.

The long list of living essayists who combine real ability with moral convictions may safely be trusted with the future excellence of the essay. It is not my intention even to enumerate the remarkable throng of present-day essayists. Names will readily occur to any thoughtful mind of men whose essay work forms contributions to current writing, much of which will remain as a permanent literary possession.

In thus hastily and somewhat discursively indicating the rise and successive stages in the evolution of the English essay, I have purposely refrained from introducing the names of more writers than those which I consider are inseparably associated with, and mainly instrumental in effecting, the evolutionary stages to which I have referred. These, in conclusion, I will briefly recapitulate (excluding the embryonic forms, such as the purely moral and didactic essays of, say Bacon) under the following heads: Satirists of social life and manners, represented by Addison and Steele. Egoists, who weave out of their own personal moods and fancies the setting for their respective subjects, such as Lamb, Leigh Hunt, and Hazlitt. The Critical and Biographical, as represented by Carlyle and Macaulay, and the reflective and moral which have emanated from such writers as Arthur Helps.

From all this it is clear that the essay as a means of literary expression must be evolved during those periods of national life when society is advanced enough to manifest its own essential peculiarities, and possessed of learning sufficient to follow the points and catch the satire of the essayist. The more advanced then the social and intellectual position of the people becomes, so in ratio will the essay advance in literary dignity and power.

As long as the English nation continues to produce

men of intellectual alertness, soundness of purpose, and believers in literary style, so long will the evolution of the essay continue onward and upward towards the consummation of that perfection of which our most optimistic philosophers sometimes write and dream.





"HULKING TOM."

A NOTE ON THE LIFE AND WORK OF
MASACCIO.

BY W. NOEL JOHNSON.

During the early years of the Fifteenth Century there lived in Florence a man of abstracted air and slovenly appearance, whose sole occupation was that of painting—constant and laborious painting. He cared little or not at all for the ordinary affairs of common life, and was absolutely indifferent to those things which men generally esteem essential to happiness and comfort. His life, though it appeared a lazy one to some, was a period of untiring struggle, of ceaseless devotion to his pencil.

A capacity for hard work was eminently his chief characteristic; and whether the noble results of his powers lay in his possession of this capacity or not, we need not stay to enquire, for at this distance of time such an enquiry would be fruitless, as we know but little of his personal history.

His rare gifts as a painter were greater, collectively, than those of any of his predecessors; and have always been so acknowledged by competent judges. He became the foremost painter of the time, and the master to whom many of the greatest men of later days were indebted not only for ideas, but their works were based on the discoveries he made.

The people of Florence at that period must have been

very much as we find them to-day. They were quick to perceive a man's peculiarity, unusual appearance, strange quality, or habit. The painter did not escape their notice, and it was not long before they dubbed him with a name which expressed to them what caught their attention as odd, or provoked their humour as curious.

It happened then, as it does to-day, that this descriptive name only expressed the man as they saw him on the surface; their shallow pates not caring to dive below, to find the real character hidden beneath the outer garb of dress or habit, nor troubling to understand what was hidden behind a veil of shyness or reserve.

The great man of whom I am speaking, came within the clutches of his fellows in this respect; but why he did so we are not exactly told. His real name was Tommaso di ser Giovanni de Castel San Giovanni, "son of the notary Ser Giovanni di Simone Guidi, of the family of Scheggia, holding property* in Val d'Arno." It appears that in early life he was nicknamed "Masaccio," by which name he has been known to posterity ever since, and it will certainly continue to be the one by which he will be known in the future.

This nickname—Masaccio—has been variously translated. Mr. Browning, in his remarkable poem of "Fra Lippo Lippi," anglicises it as "Hulking Tom." He represents Lippo as saying to the monks—

"We've a youngster here,
Comes to our convent, studies what I do,
Slouches and stares, and lets no atom drop:
His name is Guidi—he'll not mind the monks—
They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them talk,
He picks my practice up, he'll paint apace,
I hope so—though I never live so long,
I know what's sure to follow." (1).

* Probably only a hill-farm. (1.) See note 1.

Other writers explain it as meaning "big," "stupid," or "slovenly Tom;" and one again, from the great and masculine qualities of his work, transforms it into "Thundering Thomas."

Masaccio does not appear to have possessed any fault which justifies the name having clung to him so long; although he probably gave cause for it at the time.

His consistent determination to paint incessantly, and do nothing else whatever, his indifference to the ordinary respectabilities of life, and his answers to questions being always "horribly vague," may have been the reasons which caused the sharp people of Florence to confer on him a name which was anything but complimentary.

It is possible that his industry and irresistible, determined manner, became irritating to his friends and intolerable to his enemies.

But he does not stand alone by any means as the only painter who is known to fame under a name which was not the gift of his parents, or derived from the scene of his birth or labours. A large number of artists are known by such names, having different and widely separated meanings.

Among them may be mentioned 1, Fra Angelico, or "Il Beato Angelica"; 2, Paolo Uccello, because of his fondness for painting birds; 3, Ghirlandaio, the Garland maker; 4, Giorgione, from his greatness of stature; and 5, Tintoretto, because his father was a dyer; but none of these have the suggestion of contempt signified by Masaccio. Those of Fra Angelico, Uccello, and Tintoretto being well chosen, the first one conferring the highest praise.

Vasari tells us that Masaccio "was goodness itself, so ready to oblige and do service to others, that a better or kinder man could not be desired." How then shall we account for his having received an opprobrious name? He

was in advance of his time, and his work may not have been understood; but so was Lippo Lippi, and the monks found fault with his originality and his love for painting nature's beauties, but without giving him a nickname. Probably it was Masaccio's abstraction and concentration, his lack of interest in anything outside his work, which prevented his personality disarming those whose tendency it was to nickname him. These qualities would make him appear dull and stupid to his fellows; and the name having arisen, they would lead to his being known and spoken of as "hulking," "slovenly," or, if we choose, "Thundering Thomas."

He appears to have lived in and only for his Art, under the spell of whose vigorous and glorious power he was content to get along in the busy world as best he could. He troubled little or not at all about "food and raiment," although perhaps his appearance would not have suggested a lily of the field; nor did he obtain much reward for his labours.

It was during his lifetime that Florence came under the glittering and golden yoke of the Medici—to whose patronage of classic learning and the Fine Arts Europe is so greatly indebted—and it was probably due to them that he was kept from starving. Like so many other painters, who were artists, but not business men, he really received little of the payment he was entitled to for his work.

Masaccio's earliest works are said to be the frescoes in the Church of S. Clemente, at Rome. These consist of a Crucifixion, and a series which portray the events in the life of St. Catherine of Alexandria. There is some doubt, however, about the genuineness of these, and they have been ascribed to Masolino; but we need not here trouble about the evidence for or against.

The works by which "Hulking Tom" is best known are

the celebrated frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel in the Carmelite Church at Florence. They form a noble series of paintings illustrating the life of St. Peter.

In these works his powers had full and free room for exercise; and in them he plainly shows himself to have been the "facile princeps" painter of his age.

One of the most celebrated of these frescoes is that of "St. Peter Baptising the People," which contains the remarkable figure of a naked youth trembling with cold. This figure displays a wonderful knowledge of expression, anatomy, and modelling; and shows us what a student of nature Masaccio had been.

This painting alone would have placed poor "Hulking Tom" on a lofty pedestal among the men of his time. In composition, truthful imitation, and selection of forms; in the expression of the rounded surfaces of the figures, the arrangement of the drapery and the boldness of effect, it is a great advance on the painting of his predecessors.

Many painters and writers have spoken in the highest terms of praise of the great advances made by Masaccio in these frescoes, among them being some of the greatest artists the world has ever seen.

A few of these opinions must at present suffice, interesting though it would be to cull from many others. Leonardo da Vinci, perhaps the first to point out Masaccio's unique merits, said: "After the time of Giotto the art of painting declined again, because every one imitated the pictures that were already done; thus it went on from century to century until Tomaso, of Florence, nicknamed Masaccio, showed by his perfect works how those who take for their standard any one but Nature—the mistress of all masters—weary themselves in vain."

At an advanced period of his life Michel Angelo had a very high opinion of Masaccio's work, and said to Vasari

that his figures must have been alive when originally painted.

Sir Joshua Reynolds declares he was the first who saw nature through the medium of sentiment and feeling, and that he is a signal instance of what well directed diligence will do in a short time.

Kugler says : " In these works, for the first time, we find a well grounded and careful delineation of the nude.

. . . The art of raising the figures from the flat surface, hitherto only faintly indicated, here begins to give the effect of actual life."

And Mr. Ruskin, in the third volume of " Modern Painters," and elsewhere, fully praises and points out the originality and truth shown in the landscape background of the fresco of the " Tribute Money."

The work of Masaccio is chiefly remarkable for four advances : the application of perspective ; classical naturalism ; truthful landscape ; and as the first painting in which the traditional and symbolic countenance of Christ was dispensed with. On each of these points of advance much might be said, and yet much would remain to say.

Perspective in drawing, and what is called aerial perspective—really the perspective of tone and colour—are both found in his works, and applied with a truthfulness to Nature not before attempted. His drawing of linear perspective is seen most clearly in the foreshortening of the limbs of the figures, especially of the feet, which are correctly shown standing flat on the ground ; whereas, hitherto, they had been generally shown as though their owners were standing on the tips of their toes.

His classical naturalism was the result of his study of the sculpture of the ancients, a perception of the spirit of beauty found in the art of Greece, united with his own study of the men and women of his time. In this quality

his work approaches in its beauty, truth, and dignity what has been called the Grand Style in Art.

Masaccio's study of landscape was far deeper and more truthful than can be found in the works of earlier men; and so fully had he caught the spirit and character of mountain beauty, that had he or his students followed in the same path, the work of Turner in this branch might have been the glory of Italian Art, instead of being one of the many glories of the Art of England.

His face of Christ was a remarkable advance in the Religious Art of Europe at that time, and shows us how untaught genius may work out an original and fine conception through the exercise of a free and untrammelled imagination. Giotto had indeed gone to the men and women among whom he lived for his Christs and Madonnas; but he saw and painted them through the spectacles of his forerunners, and a face without "form or comeliness," still continued to show its want of heavenly or even natural beauty. But Masaccio left the traditional features entirely out of his conception, and although his face is not great or deeply religious in expression like those of Fra Angelico or the visions of Raphael, his Christ was his own. He made him a new man—he tore from the traditional face the mummy-cloth mask of the lifeless past.*

The painters of the Fifteenth Century may be grouped into two great classes—those who followed Reason, and those who followed Faith.

The first were imbued with the beauty and spirit of Greek Art; the second were influenced by the spirit and traditions of the Roman Church; they painted solely for the sake of Religious teaching, and were generally monks. To the former class belonged Masaccio, Fra Lippo Lippi, Ghirlandaio, Mantegna, Luca Signorelli, culminating

* See Note 2.

at last in the magnificent warrior Gods of Michael Angelo. Sensuous and heroic beauty! Yes, its spell sometimes becomes irresistible even to a heart beating beneath cassock and cowl. We are not told that Masaccio ever loved; but his fellow artist Lippo Lippi not only shocked the pious souls of his convent by the sensuous beauty of his paintings, but scandalised them by his elopement with the beautiful nun, Lucretia Buti, who had been his model for a madonna! We can only admire his courage—he chose “the best thing God invents.”

To the latter class belong Fra Angelico, Francia, Perugino, Bartolommeo; reaching perfection in the divine works of Raphael.

We need not compare the two, nor strive to discover which is the greater; they are both noble, both worthy of all praise in their separate spheres of work. Let us mark, however, that Masaccio was the leader of the first—the forerunner of those who loved beauty for its own sake, and strove to paint it; for he saw the delight and wonder of the world as God made it.*

Some time ago, under the title of “A Day-dream at Bellagio,” I gave some account of the life and work of Giotto, whose paintings in the Arena Chapel at Padua formed the focus of the Art of the Fourteenth Century.

In like manner the frescoes of Masaccio in the Brancacci Chapel, became the the focus or rallying point of the Art of the Fifteenth Century. In fact, this Holy retreat became the Art School for the artists of the period. It was there that many of the greatest men of the century met to study and copy; among them being Perugino, Bartolommeo, Andrea del Sarto (the perfect painter), Raphael and Michael Angelo. And it was from these paintings that Raphael copied the figure of St. Paul preaching at

* See Note 3.

Athens, and Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise, for his works in the Vatican. On both him and Michael Angelo they appear to have exerted an almost unlimited influence.

Masaccio was born in or about 1401, and died at the early age of 27 or 28, no man seems to have known or cared how or where. An income tax paper presented for the second time in 1430, was returned with the words written thereon in an unknown hand—"He is said to have died in Rome." A mystery hangs over his death as it does over the events of his life; but his works form a brilliant and, we may hope, a lasting memorial of his genius.

Mr Russell Lowell says of him:—

He came to Florence long ago,
And painted here these walls that shone,
For Raphael and for Angelo,
With secrets deeper than his own,
Then shrank into the dark again,
And died, we know not how or when.

The shadows deepened, and I turned
Half sadly from the fesco grand;
"And is this," mused I, "All ye earned,
"High-vaulted brain and cunning hand;
That ye to greater men could teach
The skill yourselves could never reach?"

"And who are they," I mused, "that wrought
Through pathless wilds, with labour long,
The highways of our daily thought?
Who reared the towers of earliest song
That lift us from the crowd to peace
Remote in sunny silences?"

Out clanged the Ave Mary bells,
And to my heart this message came:
"Each clamorous throat among them tells
What strong-souled martyrs died in flame.
To make it possible that thou
Shouldst here with brother sinners bow.

Thoughts that great hearts once broke for, we
 Breathe cheaply in the common air;
 The dust we trample heedlessly
 Throbb'd once in saints and heroes rare,
 Who perished, opening for their race
 New pathways to the common place.

Henceforth, when rings the health to those
 Who live in story and in song,
 O nameless dead, that now repose
 Safe in Oblivion's chambers strong;
 One cup of recognition true
 Shall silently be drained for you."

"Hulking Tom!"—surely the name will have lost its original significance for us. But what's in a name? Well, much to a crowd of sharp-witted, but short-sighted fools; but nothing to those who estimate a man on the real value of his work and character.

"Slovenly," "Hulking Tom!"—Fools! Noble, mysterious Painter! Lonely, indomitable spirit!—Vale!

NOTE 1.—Mr. Browning has committed an anachronism in this poem in representing Masaccio as picking up the practice of Fra Filippo Lippi. This would have been impossible. From the most reliable dates, Masaccio was eleven years old when Lippi was born, and died when the latter was sixteen; and Masaccio commenced his frescoes in the Brancacci chapel, when he was twenty-one; so that, if he did as Mr. Browning says, Lippi at that time must have been a boy of eight or nine!

Further, from Vasari's statement, just the reverse was the truth. He says: "Many affirmed that the "spirit of Masaccio had entered into the body of Fra Filippo."

NOTE 2.—It frequently happens that people are most determined about those of their opinions for which they have least direct evidence. The absence of proof appears to beget a desire for positive assertion; and where history is halting and tradition conflicting, opinion steps in with a bold front to dogmatise about its own supposition of what is the truth.

This peculiarity of human nature has been eminently disclosed by some of those who had undertaken to decide on the respective painters of the frescoes in the Brancacci chapel. The discussion has become so rife and determined in recent years that critics have

divided into opposite camps. So much has this been the case, and so little has it settled the subjects of dispute, that Mr. Ruskin tells us in "Modern Painters," that he is almost afraid to mention the frescoes for fear of some one quarrelling with him.

When the above short paper was read before the Manchester Literary Club, no contretemps was anticipated; but as events showed it was not to pass unchallenged. It was contended on that occasion that too much had been claimed for Masaccio. The challenge was made in the candid temper accorded by good-fellowship, and answered in the same spirit.

It would be both useless and tedious to attempt any discussion herein, and the following must suffice.

The frescoes in the Brancacci chapel have been variously assigned to three painters, namely, Masolino, Masaccio, and Filippino Lippi; and the uncertainty arises from the difficulty of deciding which *are* the works executed by each artist.

History and tradition are both meagre and variable; and therefore opinion only remains as a means of settling the points in question. This, to be of any value, should be founded on a comparative study of the works themselves, and of these with others assigned to the same artists; together with what little help history and tradition can give. But unfortunately those who profess to have followed this method, the only one now available, have come to different conclusions.

The probable truth about the matter is—that the frescoes are the work of all the three painters—that Masolino was the first to work there, and executed three; that he was followed by Masaccio, to whom we owe more than half; and that the rest (three and parts of one left by Masaccio unfinished), which are assigned to Filippino Lippi, were painted by him from Masaccio's designs or cartoons.

Filippino's use of these cartoons would not prevent him putting his own individuality into the work—and it is just this individuality which distinguishes those assigned to him from those assigned to Masaccio. On the other hand, that Filippino painted the frescoes themselves, does not deprive Masaccio of the merit due to him as the author of the ideas, the invention and composition, displayed in those particular designs from which Filippino worked; unless Filippino substituted his own, which is improbable.

The illustration selected for this paper shows the probable truth of the last statement. This work is acknowledged to be Masaccio's with the exception of the kneeling youth and five of the figures about the centre of the fresco, which are given to Filippino. It seems very unlikely that these were not painted from the same design as the rest of the picture—the drawing or cartoon being always prepared before the fresco itself was begun.

This being so, I do not think the work of Masaccio has been overestimated, or his genius unfairly extolled. The paper was not intended to be critical or argumentative; otherwise it would have been cast in a very different form. The object in view was to draw a strong contrast between the advances shown in Masaccio's paintings and the curious fact that so great a genius—one who marks an epoch in the Art of Painting—should have been, and should continue to be known by a nickname so much at variance with his true character and work.

NOTE 3.—With regard to the claims that are made for the advances and discoveries of Masaccio, it must not be supposed that he was not anticipated by other painters. But what they did occasionally, and as it were by accident, he did consistently, and with a conviction of their truth and artistic value. What others had only dimly and falteringly expressed, he saw clearly, felt deeply, and brought to a remarkable state of perfection. No greater praise perhaps can be accorded him than is shown by Michael Angelo and Raphael having derived inspiration from his works, which they both studied and copied.





WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED.

By JOHN MORTIMER.

MY Friend the Scholar Gipsy, writing to me the other day from Italy—that best-beloved by him of all the lands through which his pilgrim feet have wandered—told me, among other things, how it was his habit to spend much of his time rambling over the hills or along the coast, and always in company with Dante—his old friend Dante, as he was pleased to call him—supreme for him beyond all other poets, and who was likely now to be his companion for the rest of his life. This confession of poetical faith coming to me at a time when I was engaged in the study of a nineteenth century writer of society verse had the effect of inducing a sharp and suggestive contrast. On the one hand was the vision of the world-worn Dante who “grasped his song and somewhat grimly smiled,” and on the other the lighter laughter-loving Praed, who would have taken it as no offence if he had been described as “the idle singer of an empty day.” Between the two how wide a gulf is fixed! In the domain of poetry they are far as the poles asunder. They are representative of two extremes of poetical expression. Of the one it may be truthfully said that

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill ;
He saw thro' his own soul,
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,
Before him lay

For the other nothing more is claimed than that with such a modicum of the vision and the faculty divine as he possessed he chose rather to deal with the surfaces of life, not caring to penetrate much below, and avoiding what may be called the deeper seriousness. In view of these two extremes of poetical expression one might be tempted here to enter upon one of those fruitless efforts to define the nature of true poetry and its limitations in art, but I will refrain. Moreover, one has no need for a solemn and serious prelude to what after all is only the light comedy of poetry. A little consideration, however, of the nature of what is called *Vers de Société* may not be out of place. If I need a brief and concise definition of poetry which will cover my case I will chose that of Matthew Arnold who describes it as a criticism of life. I know that one may squabble endlessly regarding the adequateness of such a definition, but it is good enough for my purpose. Life is illimitably varied in its expression from the lowest forms to the highest, and the poetical faculty may be applied to these in any degree. Dante's poetry was a criticism of life, of the higher life, a divinely austere criticism which finds its expression in solemn epics. Praed's poetry too, as I hope to show you, was also a criticism of life in its degree, life in its lightly-superficial aspects, as one has said. A question of relative value might here suggest itself, but this, if you please, we will set aside. In any kind of poetry all that is required is that what is written shall be of the best of its kind.

The familiar phrase *Vers de Société* carries with it an impression of something light, trifling and evanescent, the term verse itself being of doubtful significance. Your writer of society verse may be a mere rhymers of measured commonplace, but he may also be a real poet if he can succeed in giving you an entirely new and artistic expres-

sion of the phenomena of life within his scope, and under conditions which you feel to be really poetical. There is a book, familiar to many readers, entitled "*Lyra Elegantiarum*," in which has been got together the best specimens of English society verse, or *vers d'occasion* as the compiler elects to call it, and if you look into the list of authors you will find that they are very numerous, and include such notable names as Shakespeare, Milton, Ben Jonson, Herrick, Pope, Prior, Swift, Cowper, Coleridge, Shelley, and even Wordsworth. This is what one would call worshipful society, and your writer of society verse, therefore, is in most excellent company.

Examining further, the nature of these contributions which come under this definition, you will see that they deal with the lighter aspects of life expressed often with such dainty delicacy that the authors are better remembered by them than by their more ambitious efforts. Songs of the affections are included in the category such as Ben Jonson's "Drink to me only with thine eyes," Herrick's "Gather ye rose-buds while ye may," Lovelace's address to Althea from prison, and George Withers' "Shall I wasting in despair."

Society verse has a wide range, and it is not easy to define precisely the lines which divide it from other forms of poetry. Generally, however, it may be said of the society verse we are now considering that it has in the main no very serious purpose in view; it seeks to amuse rather than to instruct. It "sports with Amaryllis in the shade, or with the tangles of Nerea's hair." It is the light wine of literature, and like champagne, it "sparkles near the brim." It concerns itself little with outside nature, the reflective element in that direction being conspicuously absent. It is descriptive and pictorial; it deals with human nature in its lighter aspects and largely

with its love-makings and pleasure-seekings. Its province is comedy and not tragedy, and to this end the writer of society verse succeeds best in his work when he brings to bear upon it—along with a keen insight into human nature—the qualities of humour, playful irony, and delicately-pointed satire. Pathos, too, may find its own fitting place in the expression. A writer of society verse necessarily deals with his immediate and contemporary surroundings. He should be able to reflect the life about him in cross lights, as it were. If poetry of this kind is to have any lasting quality in it, if it is to be something more than ephemeral, it must not only be true to itself, but be conveyed through a medium which is permanently attractive. If it is true to itself it will give us an insight into the ways of life and the manners of the time in which the poet lived, and if the poet is a master of his craft, a perfect versifier, the value of his work is thereby enhanced. In attempting to fix the place for this kind of poetry in our literature some critics have found it convenient to distinguish between poetry and verse, relegating to the former the serious and lengthened expressions, such as epics, odes, and the rest, and to the latter the briefer lays, the occasional flights; but this is not quite satisfactory, being based, in a sense, upon a principle of measurement. It is a matter, after all, really not worth contending about. Poetry is poetry whether it exists in the form of an epic, or a lyric of a few stanzas. Both may contain it in its essence or be devoid of it. Sufficient, however, has been said, of a prefatory kind, and one may now pass on to the consideration of the immediate subject in hand, with just one other added word as to the mental attitude to be assumed. It has been said of the poet that “you must love him ’ere to you he will seem worthy of your love,” and this is true of the society

species if he be, as in Praed's case, of the best kind. You must place yourself in sympathy with him, fall in with his humour, be content to limit yourself to his limitations, and seek for nothing beyond.

A great deal of society or occasional verse has been written by men who are not poets by profession, and this was so in Praed's case. In the serious business of his life he was a man of law, and eventually a politician who came to earn something of the distinction of a statesman. At no time perhaps in his life would he have set himself up to be a poet. The first collection of his poetry, published in this country and gathered from magazines and annuals of his time, did not appear until about twenty-five years after his death. It filled two substantial volumes, but like many other collections of the kind, produced after an author's death, it was too comprehensive and included a very large quantity of youthful verse which might have been judiciously left out. A selection of the best from Praed is all that the modern reader requires. In endeavouring to convey an impression of Praed's personality, along with illustrations of the work he has left behind him, it will be convenient, in the evolution of the theme, to blend the two together. A brief synopsis of biographical facts, however, will be necessary.

The life of Winthrop Mackworth Praed was a comparatively brief one, extending to no more than thirty-seven years. He was the youngest son of William Mackworth Praed, sergeant-at-law, was born in London on the 26th July, 1802, and died in London on the 15th July, 1839. He lost his mother early, went first to a private school, afterwards to Eton, and then to Cambridge, was called to the bar in 1829, entered Parliament in 1830, remaining there until the passing of the Reform Bill, was again elected in 1834, and became Secretary to the Board of

Control under Sir Robert Peel. He lost his father in 1835, was married in the same year, and, as previously stated, died in 1839.

Of Praed's life, as reflected in his work, our first impression of him is as a schoolboy. Like Hood, whom in many poetical aspects he resembled, he has given us reminiscences of his early days, indeed, there is one brief song beginning thus :

I remember, I remember
How my childhood fled by—
The mirth of its December,
And the warmth of its July ;

which may have given Hood the key-note to some much better verses, beginning with the same words. Praed went to Eton in 1814, but it was after he left Cambridge that he wrote these lines under the motto "Floreat Etona :"

Twelve years ago I made a mock
Of filthy trades and traffics :
I wondered what they meant by stock ;
I wrote delightful sapphics ;
I knew the streets of Rome and Troy,
I supped with Fates and Furies—
Twelve years ago I was a boy,
A happy boy at Drury's.

Twelve years ago ! how many a thought
Of faded pains and pleasures
Those whispered syllables have brought
From Memory's hoarded treasures !
The fields, the farms, the bats, the books,
The glories and disgraces,
The voices of dear friends, the looks
Of old familiar faces !

* * * * *

Where are my friends ? I am alone ;
No playmate shares my beaker :
Some lie beneath the churchyard stone,
And some before the Speaker ;

And some compose a tragedy,
 And some compose a rondo,
 And some draw sword for liberty,
 And some draw pleas for John Doe.

Tom Mill was used to blacken eyes
 Without the fear of sessions ;
 Charles Medlar loathed false quantities
 As much as false professions ;
 Tom Mill keeps order in the land—
 A magistrate pedantic ;
 And Medlar's feet repose unscanned
 Beneath the wide Atlantic.

* * * * *

And I am eight-and-twenty now ;
 The world's cold chains have bound me ;
 And darker shades are on my brow,
 And sadder scenes around me :
 In Parliament I fill my seat
 With many other noodles,
 And lay my head in Jernyn Street
 And sip my hock at Boodle's.

* * * * *

For hours and hours I think and talk
 Of each remembered hobby ;
 I long to lounge in Poets' Walk,
 To shiver in the Lobby ;
 I wish that I could run away
 From House, and court, and levee,
 Where bearded men appear to-day,
 Just Eton boys grown heavy.
 That I could bask in childhood's sun
 And dance o'er childhood's roses,
 And find huge wealth in one-pound-one
 Vast wit in broken noses,
 And play Sir Giles at Datchet Lane
 And call the milkmaids houris ;
 That I could be a boy again,
 A happy boy at Drury's.

Though it comes somewhat in the way of a digression one
 may here call attention to some verses in Praed's happiest

vein, written at this period, and relating to "Childhood and its Visitors." A happy child at play is interrupted by many serious callers, and among them :

The Muse of Pindus thither came,
 And wooed him with the softest numbers
 That ever scattered wealth and fame
 Upon a youthful poet's slumbers ;
 Though sweet the music of the lay,
 To Childhood it was all a riddle,
 And "Oh!" he cried, "do send away
 That noisy woman with the fiddle!"

Then Wisdom stole his bat and ball,
 And taught him with most sage endeavours,
 Why bubbles rise and acorns fall,
 And why no toy may last for ever ;
 She talked of all the wondrous laws
 Which Nature's open book discloses,
 And Childhood, ere she made a pause,
 Was fast asleep among the roses.

At Eton Praed was regarded as in some respects a marvellous boy. He was not physically strong, but full of vigorous intellectual life. This found expression in original prose and verse, and through the medium of school magazines, first of a manuscript kind and afterwards in printed form, and for outside circulation. Of the latter was the famous *Etonian* which was commenced and ran its course within the last twelvemonths of Praed's school days. He was the projector and guiding spirit of the journal, which was published by Charles Knight and contributed to by a group of the more brilliant of Praed's schoolfellows. Though Praed's fame rests upon his poetry some of his early efforts were of a prose kind, and there is extant a volume of his essays many of which were contributed to the *Etonian*. Throughout them there is a lightness of vein, a playfulness of wit, and a buoyancy of spirit, allied with a gravity belonging to the youthful

sage, all very engaging in view of the conditions of their production, and reminiscent of "the brave days when we were twenty-one," though Praed had not attained that mature age when they were written. In some of his essays you will detect a flavour of the styles of Addison and Steele, in illustration of which take the first sentence of the first essay: "He whose life has not been one continued monotony; he who has been susceptible of different passions opposite in their origins and effects, needs not to be told that the same objects, the same scenes, the same incidents, strike us in a variety of lights, according to the temper and inclination with which we survey them." Some of the titles of the essays will suggest their character: "On Hair Dressing," "Old Boots," "The Country Curate," "Solitude in a Crowd," "A Windsor Ball," and "The best Bat in the School." There is one on "Sense and Sensibility," in which, along with a title of one of Miss Austen's novels, you have a little story such as she might have chosen to tell, and more than an echo of her style. Charles Lamb wrote an essay on "The Inconveniences resulting from being Hanged," and Praed wrote one on "The Inconvenience of having an Elder Brother," in which he describes the miseries of a man who is constantly being mistaken for his elder brother, with the result that he is at first courted and fawned upon, and then treated as a fraud when the error is detected. One of his experiences may be noted. He says: "At Brighton I fell in love with Caroline Merton. She was an angel, of course, and it is not necessary to describe her more particularly. Her mother behaved to me with the greatest kindness, and she was a respectable old lady who wore a magnificent cap and played casino, while her daughter was waltzing. Caroline liked me, I am sure, for she discarded a dress because I disliked

the colour, and insulted a colonel because I thought him a fool. I was in the seventh heaven for a fortnight; I rode with her on the downs and walked with her on the Chain Pier. I drew sketches for her scrap book and scribbled poetry in her album. I gave her the loveliest poodle that ever was washed with rose-water, and called out a corpulent gentleman for talking politics while she played. Caroline was a fairy of a thousand spells; she danced like a mountain nymph and sang like a syren; she made beautiful card racks and knew Wordsworth by heart; but to me her deepest fascination was her simplicity of feeling, her independence of every mercenary consideration, her scorn of Stars and Garters, her *penchant* for cottages and waterfalls. I was already meditating what country she would choose for her retirement and what furniture she would prefer for her boudoir, when she asked me, at an ill-omened fancy ball, who was that clumsy Turk in the green turban and the saffron slippers. It was my elder brother. She did not start or change colour—well-taught beauties never do—but she danced that night with the clumsy Turk in the green turban and the saffron slippers; and when I made my next visit she was sealing a note of invitation to him and had lighted her taper with the prettiest verses I ever wrote in my life.

If your father was an alderman you may nevertheless be voted *comme il faut*; if your nose is as long as the spire of Strasburg, you may yet be considered good looking; if you have published a sermon you may still be reputed a wit; if you have picked a pocket, you may by-and-bye be restored to society. But if you have an elder brother, migrate! Go to Crim Tartary, or to Cochin China—wash the Hottentot—convert the Hindoo! At home you cannot escape the stigma that pursues you. You may

have honesty, genius, industry—no matter: you are a “detrimental” for all that.”

Among these papers there is a clever and original burlesque romance in the vein of Thackeray, entitled “The Knight and the Knave.” Of this Mr. Saintsbury truthfully says, “To say that it reminds one in more than subject of ‘Rebecca and Rowena,’ and that it was written some twenty years earlier, is to say a very great deal.”

In a somewhat lengthy poem called “Surly Hall,” name of blessed memory to Eton boys, Praed gives us his description of the aquatic sports on the Thames and other joyous school experiences, following it up with his “Vale” to that seat of learning, and concluding with these characteristic lines:

To speak the plain and simple truth
I always was a jesting youth,
A friend to merriment and fun,
No foe to quibble and to pun,
Therefore I cannot feign a tear:
And now that I have uttered here
A few unrounded accents, bred
More from the heart than from the head,
Honestly felt and plainly told,
My lyre is still, my fancy cold.

“Wearing his blushing honours thick upon him” Praed passed from Eton to Cambridge, there to acquire still further honours which it is unnecessary to particularise here. At Trinity he found himself in company with Macaulay and other bright spirits of a brilliant period. Among them were some of his old schoolfellows, and of these were Henry Nelson Coleridge and Derwent Coleridge, who afterwards wrote a memoir of Praed and edited the belated collection of his poems. In the life of Macaulay we have a picturesque description of the doings of these Trinity men, Praed being referred to as coming

there "fresh from editing the *Etonian*, a product of collective boyish efforts unique in its literary excellence and rarity." Praed was found to be a most companionable man, and what is written of Macaulay may serve, no doubt, as representative of his manner of life there. Of the historian we are told that "The day and night together was too short for one who was entering on the journey of life amidst such a band of travellers. So long as a door was open or a light burning in any of the courts, Macaulay was always in the mood for conversation and companionship. Unfailing in his attendance at lectures and chapel, blameless with regard to college laws and college discipline, it was well for his virtue that no curfew was in force within the precincts of Trinity. He never tired of recalling the days when he supped at midnight on milk-punch and roast turkey, drank tea in floods at an hour when older men are intent upon anything rather than on the means of keeping themselves awake, and made little of sitting over the fire until the bell rang for morning chapel in order to see a friend off by the early coach. In the licence of the summer vacation, after some prolonged and festive gathering, the whole party would pour out into the moonlight and ramble for mile after mile through the country, till the noise of their wide-flowing talk mingled with the twittering of the birds in the hedges." Then we read, too, of debates at the Cambridge Union, in which both Macaulay and Praed took prominent parts and opposite sides. There was no "Hansard" to chronicle these debates, but we are told that "faint recollections still survive of a discussion upon the august topic of the character of George the Third. 'To whom do we owe it?' asked Macaulay, 'that while Europe was convulsed with anarchy and desolated with war, England alone remained

tranquil, prosperous, and secure? To whom but the 'Good Old King?' Why was it that—when neighbouring capitals were perishing in the flames, our own was illuminated only for triumphs? You may find the cause in the same three words the—'Good Old King.' Praed, on the other hand, would allow his late monarch neither public merits nor private virtues. 'A good man! If he had been a plain country gentleman with no wider opportunities for mischief, he would at least have bullied his footman and cheated his steward.' "

Among Praed's essays is one relating to this time, entitled "The Union Club," and descriptive of a debate, possibly the one already referred to, in which Macaulay's rising is thus heralded :

But the favourite comes with his trumpets and drums,
And his arms and his metaphors crossed ;
And the audience—O dear !—vociferate "Hear,"
Till they're half of them deaf as a post.

Then we are told how "the honourable gentleman, after making the grand tour in a hand canter, touching cursorily upon Rome, Constantinople, Amsterdam, Philadelphia, and the Red Sea ; with two quotations, two or three hundred similes, and two or three hundred thousand metaphors," proceeds to the substance of his speech, in which Praed has succeeded in giving an admirable imitation of Macaulay's style.

Bulwer, afterwards Lord Lytton, was a member of the "Union" at this time, and figures in the debates. Of his impression of Praed he has given us these lines. After referring to the poet's great promise and deploring his early death, he says :

Granta beheld him with such loving eyes,
Lift the light lance that struck at every prize ;
What the last news? The medal, Praed has won.
What the last joke? Praed's epigram or pun.

And every week that club-room, famous then,
 Where striplings settled questions spoiled by men;
 When Grand Macaulay sat triumphant down—
 Heard Praed's reply—and longed to halve the crown.

The milk-punch of those famous suppers, already referred
 to, was to have its own celebration in rhyme under
 the title "The Modern Nectar," in which we are told how
 one day Bacchus came down to the abodes of mortals
 and lighted upon

A wandering poet who thought it his duty
 To feed upon nothing but bowls and beauty.

and how

Beneath a tree in the sunny weather,
 They sat them down and drank together.

The result was that when the carousal was over

The god departed scarcely knowing
 A zephyr's from a rose's blowing,
 A frigate from a pewter flagon,
 Or Thespis from his own state waggon;
 And rolling about like a barrel of grog,
 He went up to Heaven as drunk as a hog!

Arrived there, he thus delivered his drunken soul,

"Now may I," he lisped, "for ever sit,
 In Lethe's darkest and deepest pit,
 Where dullness everlasting reigns
 O'er the quiet pulse and the drowsy brains;
 Where ladies jest and lovers laugh,
 And noble lords are bound in calf,
 And Zoilus for his sins rehearses
 Old Bentham's prose, old Wordsworth's verses.
 If I have not found a richer draught
 Than ever yet Olympus quaffed,
 Better and brighter and dearer far
 Than the golden sands of Pactolus are.

And then he filled in triumph up
 To the highest top-sparkle, Jove's brimming cup;
 And pulling up his silver hose,
 And turning in his tottering toes,

(While Hebe, as usual, the mischievous gipsy,
Was laughing to see her brother tipsy),
He said, " May it please your high Divinity,
This nectar is—Milk-Punch at Trinity !"

While Praed was at Cambridge an arrangement was made with him by Charles Knight for the bringing out of a new journal to be called *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, the contributors being undergraduates of Praed's set, and among them Macaulay. This journal, as far as Praed was concerned, only extended to three or four numbers to which he contributed liberally.

When he left Cambridge he returned to Eton as a private tutor, and at this time Knight induced him to enter upon a new journalistic venture in the shape of a weekly paper which was to be called *The Brazen Head*. It only lasted for a few weeks, but it was of a humorous character, dealing with topics of the time in the form of confabulations between the Friar and *The Brazen Head*. "The Chaunt of the Brazen Head," an introductory poem in which that oracle delivers itself upon men and things, is one of the happiest illustrations of Praed's style in this particular vein of satire. Here are some extracts from it :

I think whatever mortals crave,
With impotent endeavour—
A wreath, a rank, a throne, a grave,
The world goes round for ever ;
I think that life is not too long,
And therefore I determine,
That many people read a song
Who will not read a sermon.

I think you've looked through many hearts
And mused on many actions,
And studied man's component parts
And Nature's compound fractions ;
I think you've picked up truth by bits
From foreigner and neighbour ;

I think the world has lost its wits
And you have lost your labour.

* * * *

I think that some are very wise,
And some are very funny ;
And some grow rich by telling lies,
And some by telling money.

* * * *

I think while zealots fast and frown,
And fight for two or seven ;
That there are fifty roads to town,
And rather more to Heaven.

* * * *

I think that love is like a play,
Where tears and smiles are blended ;
Or like a faithless April day,
Whose shine with shower is ended ;
Like Colnbrook pavement, rather rough,
Like trade, exposed to losses ;
And like a Highland plaid—all stuff,
And very full of crosses.

* * * *

I think poor beggars court St. Giles,
Rich beggars court St. Stephen ;
And death looks down with nods and smiles,
And makes the odds all even.

* * * *

I think that some have died of drouht,
And some have died of drinking ;
I think that nought is worth a thought,
And I'm a fool for thinking.

It would seem that it was during this second residence for two years at Eton that Praed entered upon the full flowering time of his poetical genius, and here it will be convenient to pause for awhile in this record and take a brief survey of the results. What one is most concerned with is the society verse which he has left us, but in the collected poems there is much other which scarcely comes

under that definition. Among his recreations he made adventures into the realms of fairy, of legend, and of romance, and these tales are of a more or less lengthy kind, but eminently readable in their lightness and grace, and delightful blending of the weird with the whimsical. In the poem called "Lillian" we have a story of a dragon of Arthur's time, and of the rescue of a maiden by a chivalrous knight. The description of the dragon will give an illustration of the manner of treatment :

It was a pretty monster, too,
With a crimson head and a body blue,
And wings of a warm and delicate hue,
Like the glow of a deep carnation ;
And the terrible tail that lay behind,
Reached out so far, as it twisted and twined,
That a couple of dwarfs of wondrous strength
Bore, when he travelled, its horrible length,
Like a duke's at a coronation.

The tale is one told for children, and its purpose is shown in the concluding lines :

Enough, my tale is all too long
Fair children, if the trifling song
That flows for you to-night,
Hath stolen from you one gay laugh
Or given your quiet hearts to quaff
One cup of young delight.
Pay ye the Rhymer for his toils
In the coinage of your golden smiles,
And treasure up his idle verse
With the stories ye loved from the lips of your nurse.

In "The Troubadour" we have a lengthy and unfinished romance of Cœur-de-Lion's time. Of one lady we have this description :

She was a very pretty nun,
Sad, delicate, and five-feet-one ;
Her face was oval, and her eye
Looked like the heaven in Italy.

Among the legends we have one of "The Haunted Tree," another of "The Drachenfels," and a third of "The Teufel-haus," but over these we may not linger, though on every page there are temptations to do so. The most notable, perhaps, of the poems in this series is "The Red Fisherman," or "The Devil's Decoy," in which the evil one is described as angling for the souls of men with the appropriate bait for each. A dark and dismal pool is "The Devil's Decoy," and an Abbot wandering out into the moonlight night came upon the dreadful angler there, who is thus described :

All alone by the side of the pool
A tall man sat on a three-legged stool,
Kicking his heels in the dewy sod,
And putting in order his reel and his rod ;
Red were the rags his shoulders wore,
And a high red cap on his head he bore :
His arms and his legs were long and bare.

* * * * *

It might be time or it might be trouble
Had bent that stout back nearly double ;
Sunk in their deep and hollow sockets
That blazing couple of Congreve rockets ;
And shrunk and shrivelled that tawny skin
Till it hardly covered the bones within.

Very curious bait has the devil in his iron box, including a bishop's mitre which is thrown out to catch the Abbot himself. That holy man is nearly caught ; with a sign of the cross, however, he breaks the spell and the devil's line, but is destined, as the devil chucklingly says thereafter to carry the hook in his mouth. Hitherto he had been a fluent speaker in sermon and prayer :

In preaching he
Had kept the Court an hour awake,
And the King himself three-quarters,
But ever from that hour, 'tis said,
He stammered and he stuttered.

* * * * *

He stuttered o'er blessing, he stuttered o'er ban,
 He stuttered drunk or dry ;
 And none but he and the Fisherman
 Could tell the reason why !

For the writing of society verse, Praed was admirably equipped. You recognise in him a society man of the first quality : he was a scholar and a gentleman. He had outward graces which made him acceptable everywhere, and he moved in the best society of his time. As has been already said the trend of his life was not to literature in any professional sense, but rather to law and politics. Poetry was not his pursuit but his recreation, and yet in the power of expressing himself in melodious and harmonious numbers he is in his own line, unsurpassed. In reviewing his powers of observation on men and manners he reminds you of Thackeray, and when you come to sum up what he has written you are impressed with its wholesomeness and freedom from all that is coarse or offensive. Prior was the great predecessor of Praed, but if you compare the two you will see what a marked advance has been made, and must give the palm for purity to Praed.

A great deal of his society verse deals with scenes that are gay and festive. There is much dancing in it, and the music of the fiddles keeps time to the accompaniment of flying feet. He is the poet of the ball room. Of the loves that are light and evanescent we have a sample in "The Belle of the Ball-room" :

I saw her at the County Ball,
 There, when the sounds of flute and fiddle,
 Gave signal sweet in that old hall,
 Of hands across and down the middle;
 Her's was the subtlest spell by far
 Of all that set young hearts romancing,
 She was our queen, our rose, our star,
 And then she danced—O, Heaven her dancing !

* * * *

She talked—of politics or prayers,
Of Southey's prose, or Wordsworth's sonnets,
Of dangles—or of dancing bears ;
Of battles—or the last new bonnets.

* * * *

Through sunny May, through sultry June,
I loved her with a love eternal ;
I spoke her praises to the moon,
I wrote them in the Sunday Journal.

* * * *

She warbled Handel, it was grand ;
She made the Catalini jealous ;
She touched the organ, I could stand
For hours and hours to blow the bellows.

* * * *

We parted ; months and years rolled by ;
We met again four summers after.
Our parting was all sob and sigh,
Our meeting was all mirth and laughter ;
For in my heart's most secret cell
There had been many other lodgers ;
And she was not the ball-room's belle,
But only—Mrs. something Rogers.

Another of these partners of the dance is one whose talk
is persistently of the weather :

At Cheltenham where one drinks one's fill
Of folly and cold water ;
I danced last year my first quadrille
With old Sir Geoffrey's daughter.

* * * *

And well my heart might deem her one
Of life's most precious flowers ;
For half her thoughts were of its sun,
And half were of its showers.

* * * *

I vowed that last new thing of Hook's
Was vastly entertaining ;
And Laura said—" I doat on books,
Because it's always raining ! "

Then, among other things, he tried her with the drama,
but—

What cared she for Medea's pride,
Or Desdemona's sorrow ?
Alas ! my beauteous listener sighed,
" We must have rain to-morrow " !

Again, he tells her tales of other lands :

I laughed at Li-bon's love of wars ;
Vienna's dread of treason ;
And Laura asked me — Where the glass
Stood at Madrid last season.

Whatever the subject may be it is always the same—

The horrid phantoms come again,
Rain, hail, and snow, and vapour.

Flattery is equally ineffective :

I envied gloves upon her arm,
And shawls upon her shoulder ;
And when my worship was most warm
She " Never felt it colder."
I don't object to wealth or land ;
And she will have the giving
Of an extremely pretty hand,
Some thousands and a living.
She makes silk purses, broiders stools,
Sings sweetly, dances finely.
Paints screens, subscribes to Sunday schools,
And sits a horse divinely ;
But to be linked for life to her—
The desperate man who tried it,
Might marry a barometer
And hang himself beside it !

In these light lays of the loves of the ball-room the poet makes use of a form of rhythm, an eight-lined stanza, exquisitely musical, and frequently used by him elsewhere. So subtly is the musical form wedded to the words that one scarce knows in which is the greater charm.

This eight-lined stanza is never so effective as in his

" Letter of Advice," written by Miss Medora Trevilian to Miss Araminta Vavasour :

You tell me you're promised a lover,
 My own Araminta, next week ;
 Why cannot my fancy discover
 The hue of his coat and his cheek ?
 Alas ! if he look like another—
 A vicar, a banker, a beau—
 Be deaf to your father and mother
 My own Araminta, say " No ! "

* * * *

Remember the thrilling romances
 We read on the bank in the glen ;
 Remember the suitors our fancies
 Would picture for both of us then.
 They wore the red cross on their shoulder,
 They had vanquished and pardoned their foe—
 Sweet friend, are you wiser or colder ?
 My own Araminta, say " No ! "

* * * *

If he wears a top-boot in his wooing,
 If he comes to you riding a cob,
 If he talks of his baking or brewing,
 If he puts up his feet on the hob,
 If he ever drinks port after dinner,
 If his brow or his breeding is low,
 If he calls himself " Thompson " or " Skinner,"
 My own Araminta, say " No ! "

* * * *

He must walk—like a god of old story
 Come down from the home of his rest ;
 He must smile—like the sun in his glory
 On the buds he loves ever the best ;
 And oh ! from its ivory portal,
 Like music, his soft speech must flow !
 If he speak, smile, or walk like a mortal,
 My own Araminta, say " No ! "

I am entirely sympathetic with Mr. Saintsbury when he says of this poem, " I really do not know how many times

I have read it, but I never can read it to this day without being forced to read it out loud like a schoolboy and mark with accompaniment of handbeat, the lines."

In his "Good Night to the Season," he has lengthened the stanza to twelve lines, of which this may be taken as a sample :

Good night to the season ! another
 Wi I come with its trifles and toys,
 And hurry away like his brother,
 In sunshine, and odour and noise.
 Will it come with a rose or a briar ?
 Will it come with a blessing or curse ?
 Will its bonnets be lower or higher ?
 Will its morals be better or worse ?
 Will it find me grown thinner or fatter ?
 Or fonder of wrong or of right ;
 Or married—or buried ? no matter ;
 Good night to the season, good night !

Of his "Every Day Characters" the most charming portrait Praed has given to us is of "The Vicar," the most worthy and reverend Dr. Brown, the friend of his youth. Along with other delightful characteristics, the description of him, tells how

His talk was like a stream which runs
 With rapid change from rocks to roses ;
 It slipped from politics to puns,
 It passed from Mahomet to Moses ;
 Beginning with the laws that keep
 The planets in their radiant courses,
 And ending with some precept deep,
 For dressing eels or shoeing horses.

* * * *

He did not think all mischief fair,
 Although he had a knack of joking ;
 He did not make himself a bear,
 Although he had a taste for smoking ;
 And when religious sects ran mad,
 He held, in spite of all his learning ;
 That if a man's belief is bad,
 It will not be improved by burning.

There is a serious side in Praed's poetry, where the tricky, whimsical, humorous spirit gives place to the expression of tender sentiment, which sometimes deepens into pathos. Here are some lines which remind one of Clough :

As o'er the deep the seaman roves
 With cloud and storm above him ;
 Far, far from all the smiles he loves
 And all the hearts that love him.
 'Tis sweet to find some friendly mast
 O'er that same ocean sailing,
 And listen in the hollow blast
 To hear the pilots' hailing.

On rolls the sea ! and brief the bliss,
 And farewell follows greeting ;
 On rolls the sea ! one hour is his
 For parting and for meeting ;
 And who shall tell, on sea or shore,
 In sorrow or in laughter,
 If he shall see that vessel more
 Or hear that voice hereafter ?

Praed lost his mother when he was very young, and there are some lines in "The Troubadour," entitled "My Mother's Grave," which have a pathetic interest. Of his dim recollection of her, he says :

Not in the waking thought by day,
 Not in the sightless dream by night,
 Do the mild tones and glances play
 Of her who was my cradle's light ;
 But in some twilight of calm weather
 She glides, by fancy dimly wrought ;
 A glittering cloud, a darkling beam,
 With all the quiet of a thought,
 And all the passion of a dream
 Linked in a golden spell together.

On this serious side, too, one likes to know that he had a deep affection for his sister, to whom, on the eve of a

college examination, he addressed some verses in which he affectionately describes her as his Patron saint :

St. Mary's tolls her longest chime, and slumber softly falls
On Granta's quiet solitudes, her cloisters and her halls ;
But trust one little rest is theirs, who play in glory's game,
And throw to-morrow their last throw for academic fame,
Whose hearts have panted for this hour ; and while slow months went by,
Beat high to live in story—half-a-dozen stories high.

* * * * *

And some were born to be the first, and some to be the last ;
I cannot change the future now ; I will not mourn the past ;
But while the firelight flickers and the lonely lamp burns dim,
I'll fill one glass of claret till it sparkles to the brim,
And like a knight of chivalry first vaulting on his steed,
Commend me to my Patron Saint for a blessing and good speed !—

One more illustration of this pathetic side and then one must hurry on to a close. There is a poem called "Josephine," in which Praed handles a very delicate subject in a very delicate manner ; and suggestive, by way of contrast, of some very different forms of treatment of the same kind of experience, which one has met with in more modern verse of a similar type. Josephine is a "light of love," and of her we read thus :

She did not speak of ring or vow,
But filled the cup with wine ;
And took the roses from her brow
To make a wreath for mine ;
And bade me when the gale should lift
My light skiff o'er the wave,
To think as little of the gift
As of the hand that gave ;—
"Go gaily o'er the sea, love,
And find your own heart's queen ;
And look not back to me, love,
Your humble Josephine !"

To that heart's queen, when found, the singer says :

Alas ! your lips are rosier,
Your eyes of softer blue,

And I have never felt for her
 As I have felt for you ;
 Our love was like the bright snow-flakes,
 Which melt before you pass ;
 Or the bubble on the wine which breaks
 Before you lip the glass ;
 You saw my eyelids wet, love,
 Which she has never seen ;
 But bid me not forget, love,
 My poor Josephine !

There is no further space to deal with some other aspects of Praed's poetry in the serious vein. He wrote lays in the style of Macaulay, and of these are "Sir Nicholas at Marston Moor," and "The Covenanter's Lament for Bothwell Brigg," and in "Time's Song" we have an evidence of a deep seriousness of the reflective kind which never found adequate expression. Neither can one dwell upon the further incidents of his life. As already stated, he was called to the bar and went on circuit. Crabb Robinson met him once. Under date October 24, 1831, he says: "At the Bury Quarter Sessions I was invited to dine at the 'Angel' by the Bar, but I refused the invitation, and only went up in the evening ; then, however, I spent a few hours very agreeably. Austen was the great talker, of course. Scarcely anything but the Reform Bill talked of, and Praed, the M.P. and new member of the circuit since my retirement, was the only oppositionist. He spoke fluently and not ill against the Bill." Then follows this note of a later date: "Praed died young. In one particular he was superior to all the political young men of his time—in taste and poetical aspirations. His poems have been collected. I am not much acquainted with them, but they are at least works of taste. Praed had the manners of a gentleman."

After Praed had entered Parliament he made rapid progress, gained the confidence of the Duke of Welling-

ton, a place in the Government of Sir Robert Peel, and was spoken of by Lord John Russell as a rising statesman. It is interesting to us in Cottonopolis to know that his maiden speech was on the subject of the cotton duties. He wrote leaders for the *Morning Post*, and political matter and satirical verse, of a humorous kind, in the interests of the party to which he belonged. We are not much concerned with this kind of verse, but it would be a mistake to omit reference to some "Stanzas to the Speaker Asleep." That ever hard-worked functionary had fallen asleep during a debate in the reformed Parliament, and the poet addresses him thus :

Sleep; Mr. Speaker, it's surely fair
If you don't in your bed, that you should in your chair;
Longer and longer still they grow,
Tory and Radical "Aye" and "No,"
Talking by night and talking by day;
Sleep, Mr. Speaker; sleep, sleep, while you may!

* * * *

Sleep, Mr. Speaker; Cobbett will soon
Move to abolish the sun and the moon;
Hume, no doubt, will be taking the sense
Of the House on a saving of thirteen-pence;
Grattan will growl, or Baldwin bray;—
Sleep, Mr. Speaker; sleep, sleep, while you may!

* * * *

Sleep, Mr. Speaker; sweet to men
Is the sleep that cometh but now and then;
Sweet to the sorrowful, sweet to the ill,
Sweet to the children that work in a mill;
You have more need of sleep than they;—
Sleep, Mr. Speaker; sleep, sleep, while you may!

Among one's literary loves, as writers of society verse, Praed, Thackeray, and Hood are grouped together. In their outlook upon life they had all much in common, equally alike, too, as authors and as men, they com-

mand our admiration and regard. There is in all of them the same high tone, the same absence of all that is mean. Of Hood, especially, one is constantly reminded in turning over the pages of Praed. In the subject matter and style of much of their poetry there is a strong resemblance, but one need not stay to appraise their separate values. In their domestic relations, too, there existed the same happy conditions. Praed's married life lasted but four years, and a few days before his end came he addressed some lines to his wife, which, in depth of feeling, remind one of similar affectionate utterances of the other poet, and reveal to us something of the underlying seriousness, sweetness, and tenderness of Praed's otherwise humorous and buoyant nature. With these benedictory lines, the last written by this society poet, regarding one who must have been to him of all human society the nearest and dearest, one may fittingly bring this imperfect dissertation to a close :

Dearest, I did not dream, four years ago,
 When through your veil I saw your bright tear shine ;
 Caught your clear whisper, exquisitely low,
 And felt your soft hand tremble into mine,
 That in so brief—so very brief a space,
 He, who in love, both clouds and cheers our life,
 Would lay on you, so full of light, joy, grace,
 The darker, sadder duties of the wife,—
 Doubts, fears, and frequent toil and constant care
 For this poor frame, by sickness sore bestead ;
 The daily tendance on the fractious chair,
 The nightly vigil by the feverish bed.

Yet not unwelcomed doth this morn arise,
 Though with more gladsome beams it might have shone ;
 Strength of these weak hands, light of these dim eyes,
 In sickness, as in health—bless you, My Own !



THE ABUSE OF WORDS.

BY ARTHUR W. FOX.

THE following pages are penned in no spirit of pedantry, than which few faults are more repulsive to the true critic. But in the face of a gradually-increasing vocabulary of slang, and a continually growing tendency to use words in a sense far removed from their legitimate meaning, a timely protest would seem to be needed. Slang itself is too vast a subject to be discussed in a brief space, and the condemnation of its indiscriminate abuse will be left to the conscience of the person who is guilty of its enormities. But the second misuse of language is of graver import; a word is the expression of a thought, or a part of a thought; hence it follows that a loose use of words implies a corresponding laxity in thinking power. In a scientific age such inexactness is to be deprecated; for science is, or professes to be, the doughty champion of exact ideas. Literature, it may be urged, is more than the interpreter of science, and it is good for the world that by means of sound literature it can soar above the narrow limits of science. But as literary form is the indispensable characteristic of good literature, it becomes of no mean importance to exercise extreme care in the use of words. It may be true that it is impossible to use words in their strict etymological sense alone, for most words have a derived as well as an

etymological meaning. But this much must be said—that the root-meaning of a word is commonly a faithful guide to its comparatively correct use, while, to say the least, it serves to prevent indiscriminate abuse.

Jane Austen points the moral of the foregoing remarks in her own inimitable fashion in *Northanger Abbey*. Henry Tilney is discussing with Catherine Morland that once famous novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, when with true girlish inexactness of language she exclaims:—

“But it is a *nice* book, and why should I not call it so?” “Very true,” said Henry, “and this is a very *nice* day; and we are taking a very *nice* walk; and you are two very *nice* young ladies. Oh! it is a very *ni-e* word indeed; it does for everything. Originally, perhaps, it was applied only to express neatness, propriety, delicacy, or refinement; people were *nice* in their dress, in their sentiments, or in their choice. But now every commendation on every subject is comprised in that one word.”

Most readers would most unhesitatingly and not unjustly set down the foregoing sentiments of Henry Tilney to a *nice* priggishness. But even a prig can speak the truth, and the naked truth (*pax* the immortal Mrs. Hominy) sometimes. Few words have been so much abused as the unlucky word *nice*. Like charity it has been made “to cover a multitude of sins,” if the word sin may be fitly applied to wanton perversion of speech. How meagre is that imagination, how slipshod that style of conversation, which is content with one adjective to express the fitness of the weather, the charms of a young girl, the geniality of a kindly man, the excellence of a good dinner, the merits of a pleasant book, the beauty of a flower, the sweetness of a song, the quality of a musical voice, the loveliness of a picture, the cheerful appearance of a handsome room, the sturdy vigour of a forest tree, the convenience of a comfortable house, and the delight of a happily-spent evening, to say nothing of a thousand more

of the objects and events of daily life! The very essence of the word *nice* is neatness and good taste. Surely, then, it is not legitimate to extend its meaning to cover all pleasant sensations experienced by mankind "from China to Peru." If the word be used at all its use should be *nice*—that is, in a sense strictly appropriate to the noun with which it is used.

But *nice* is not the only word which is made the state of thought, or the ill-fitting shoe of a slipshod mind. Young ladies especially have a habit, which would be reprehensible in any less charming beings, of using wholly inadequate words to express totally inappropriate ideas. There is that wretched word *sweet*, which alternates with the word *nice*, and which once had a meaning of its own in relation to the senses of taste, hearing, and smell. Now we can find a *sweet* house which is not built of gingerbread; a *sweet* dress, which is not made of sugar; a *sweet* picture, which is not painted with honey; a *sweet* landscape, which is not composed of pastry; and once I have heard the word applied to the most rugged sea-cliff in the west of Ireland. When a perpendicular crag of nearly two thousand feet in height can be called *sweet*, even by ripe girlish lips, it is time to enter a stern protest. A *sweet* precipice is something new in nature, and no extension of metaphor can excuse such a horrible barbarism. Similarly, in speaking of the bodice of a dress, it is a common thing to hear the fair wearers style it a *body*! "Was it the girl with the blue body?" queried one dainty damsel of another. She met with her deserts in the comparatively crushing retort, "I don't know; I haven't seen her *body*." Those who have greater experience of female society than the present writer will be able to add illustrations of a no less perverse misuse of words, which would be intolerable in men, and which are only

endured by reason of the charms of the utterer. But a *nice* use of words lends an additional attraction to feminine conversation, and those who enjoy its pleasures would do well to note and correct the undisciplined eccentricities of feminine epithets.

Another verbal sufferer is the word *tasty*, which is too often misused to take the place of tasteful. A tasty dish is both toothsome and intelligible; but what meaning can be attached to a *tasty* girl? The King of Borrioboolah Gha, after licking his blubbery lips and smoothing down his "capacious aumbrie," might remark in his own expressive language to his elegant Queen, "The pale-face stranger was a *tasty* girl." Nor can it be denied that he would have been quite correct in his epithet. But to misapply the word *tasty* to a neatly-trimmed hat, to a well-fitting and becoming dress, to the suitable furniture of a room, and to a human being of either sex, affords an admirable illustration of a "nice derangement of epitaphs." Who wants to eat a hat or a dress, or neat furniture? Who, save a cannibal, or the devil, seeks to devour a man or a woman? Yet a word which can justly be applied to piquancy of flavour, and to that alone, is frequently used of all these inappropriate objects. An adjective is meant to describe the noun to which it relates. It is therefore of some importance to consider whether the two words suit one another before setting them together. Ill-suited marriages of words produce discordance of ideas, and they are the source of more than one bastard metaphor and of many a needless confusion. When, for example, a kindly maiden calls another "A *nasty* thing," and such expressions are heard in the best regulated families, does she realise the exact sense of her expression, and would she use it if she did? The words mean "a filthy slut," neither more nor less; and though filthy sluts

and slatterns too are to be found in our land, let us hope that they are not so common as the use of the words "a nasty thing."

Literary men, who are precisians in such matters, have, however, certain cant-words of which they are unduly fond, and which they would do well to vary now and then. There is one word, which is dear to most of us, the word *quaint*. For myself I own its fascination, and I can only say of myself, what Prospero said of Ferdinand, "Poor worm, thou art infected." The word is a singular word: it seems to express more than it actually does, and it does express more than appears on the surface. It has a fine antique *bouquet* about it, like old port with a bee's wing. But it has its limitations; and even port itself, if it be kept too long, is apt to lose its flavour. Nor is *quaint* a synonym with *curious*, as some would insist. Many things may be curious without being quaint. A calf with two tails might justly be called *curious*, but it could not be called *quaint*. Neither does *quaint* exactly correspond with *odd*; *odd* numbers are not of necessity *quaint*. Nor again can it take the place of the compound word *old-world*; the mummy of Ramses the Great is *old-world*, but it is not *quaint*. Yet we find the word used to describe a phrase or simile which is out of the common, a child which is old-fashioned, a costume which is odd, and a host of dissimilar objects or beings, each of which is distinguished by only one of the attributes combined in the word *quaint*. There are fewer *quaint* fancies and less *quaint* language in literature than we are apt to imagine. There are fewer *quaint* costumes and fewer *quaint* children in life than might be supposed. The original meaning of the word itself is *neat, trim, well-made*. The derived sense combines into one comprehensive summary of six letters the attributes of *curious, odd, uncom-*

mon, old-world, pithy, and fanciful. That George Herbert possesses all of these characteristics in his poetry would seem to be true. But it does not, therefore, follow that every unusual metaphor or phrase of his is *quaint*. The word is a compound of many simples, and it is an abuse of language to use it loosely to denote only one of these simples.

Many other long-suffering words might be cited to emphasise the need for greater care in the use of language ; but the six already discussed will be enough to illustrate the point at issue. It is the function of literary men to consider the production of literature from every side. Is it not then of much importance to devote some attention to the exact use of words, and to take care that they are made to express not merely the thought of the writer, but what they themselves mean ? The examples of mis-use have been chosen from their frequency in conversation both literary and ordinary : they might have been multiplied an hundredfold, but "Multiplication is vexation," we are told, and in the present case perhaps it is unnecessary. Pedantry and hypercriticism have not been defended : they are two loathly fiends, which the high priest of literature would do well to exorcise. But exactness in the employment of words need never degenerate into pedantry, still less soar into hypercriticism. It is a worthy aim for all men of letters and would-be men of letters, and it affords the most important distinction between literature and journalism. The man of letters desires to convey in the most effective fashion to the reading public, what he means, neither more nor less. The object of the journalist is to produce an effect for the time being. Compare the style of Huxley with the leading articles in the *Daily Telegraph*, and the distinction becomes sufficiently obvious. There is no better

discipline for the literary man than to weigh well the sense of each word before he sets it down, lest he in his turn should be "weighed in the balance and found wanting." There are few faults so irritating as want of precision in words; the great stylists of all ages have taken extreme care in this important matter. To them words have been sacred things, and they have used them with a due sense of their own responsibility. They may have failed often, but it is their success surely, which is worthy of imitation rather than their faults. It remains then for men of letters in the present day to take care of their words, lest these very words rise up in judgment against them before the censorious court of a critical posterity.





ROBIN HOOD.

BY GEO. A. SHAW.

In this our spacious isle, I think there is not one,
But he of Robin Hood has heard, and Little John;
And to the end of time the tales shall ne'er be done,
Of Scarlock, George a Green, and Much the Miller's son.
Of Tuck the merry Friar, which many a sermon made,
In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws, and his trade.

Drayton's "Polyolbion."

During the two or three centuries immediately following the Norman invasion of England, a continual struggle was taking place between the conquering and the conquered races, and for many years Anglo-Saxons who could not or would not emigrate sought refuge in the forests with their families, and if they were rich and powerful, with their servants and vassals.

These banded themselves into companies, and by stratagem endeavoured to take back from their oppressors what had been wrested from them by force.

These refugees or unconquered remnants of a conquered nation are spoken of as brigands, thieves, and outlaws by historians friendly to the conquest. "Each day," they say, "was committed a number of thefts caused by the natural villainy of the people and the immense riches of the country." But on the other hand, the native population regarded the invaders as their natural enemies, and considered that in seizing their goods and chattels, they were merely recovering their lawful properties.

The laws made by the Normans were to the Saxons mere words, and had no sanctity in their estimation, and the condition of affairs against which they fought was one produced by tyranny and oppression. Thus it came about that to the Anglo-Saxons the word "outlaw" ceased to have a degrading significance, and was employed to indicate an occupation which in those days was by no means despised.

In the old ballads and romances the bold outlaw is always surrounded by a haze of freedom, geniality, and generosity. He is shown to us as the gayest and bravest of men, who was the king of the forest, and feared not the king of the country. The vast wooded tracts in the province of York were the haunt of a numerous band, who had for their chief one Sewyn, the son of Sigg.

Also about this time Hereward the Wake, gathered together his little group of followers at the Camp of Refuge, in the Isle of Ely, and waged a harrassing warfare against the governors of the neighbouring towns and fortresses.

The news of his brilliant achievements spread over England, and his adventures were celebrated in popular ballads chanted throughout the country.

Such was the condition of life in England just prior to the time when Robin Hood is supposed to have existed. Perpetual terror reigned from one end of the country to the other, and every man kept his house filled with arms and barred like a town in a state of siege.

Possession was then regarded as being rather more than nine points of the law.

The earliest mention we have of Robin Hood is made by the Scottish historian, John of Fordun, who in his "*Scotichronicon*," written about 1340, gives us a little insight into the social and political circumstances of the

celebrated outlaw chieftain. After describing the final defeat of Simon de Montford, at the battle of Evesham in the reign of Henry III., Fordun says:—"Then from amongst the dispossessed and banished arose that most famous cut-throat Robin Hood and Little John, with their accomplices, whom the foolish multitude are so extravagantly fond of celebrating in tragedy and comedy, and the ballads concerning whom, sung by the jesters and minstrels, delight them beyond all others." He, however, mitigates the epithet of "cut-throat" by adding a little further on, "of whom, however, are some praiseworthy facts narrated." Fordun was a veracious chronicler, and had travelled all over England for the purpose of collecting materials for his work, examining with care and diligence its literature and traditions, so that we may take these statements as being a very fair approximation to the truth.

The next mention of our hero in point of antiquity occurs in Langland's poem, "The Vision of Piers Plowman" when the character of "Sloth" says:—

I kan not perfitly my paternoster as the priest, it sayeth,

But I kan rimes of Robin Hode and Randolph Earl of Chester.

Beyond this no reference has been made to Robin Hood by the historical writers of the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, so that almost the whole of the materials on which to build a connected story of his life must of necessity be drawn from the ballads of the period.

A well-known writer on folklore says*:—"These ballads are full of incident and human character; they reflect the manners and feelings of remote times; they delineate much that the painter has not touched, and the historian forgotten; they express without acrimony a sense of public injury or of private wrong; nay, they even venture into the

* Allan Cunningham, "Wright's Store of Knowledge."

regions of fancy, and give pictures in the spirit of romance."

Of the many ballads dealing with this subject, "The Little Geste of Robyn Hood" is the most prominent. It was printed in London by Wynken de Worde, about the year 1489, but as far as is known at present the original manuscript is not in existence, so that it is impossible to say at what time it was written, though the probabilities are that it dates from about the time of Chaucer. It consists of eight fyttes or cantos, and contains in all nearly 2,000 lines, descriptive of the exploits of the famous outlaw and his companions. Usually each fytte is composed of one ballad complete in itself, though in some instances the division is not so distinct, one story running on into the next canto. The first anecdote refers to the meeting of "Robin Hood and the Knight." The opening stanzas give a general account of Robin Hood's station in life, the district he frequented, and the companions with whom he associated.

Thus the ballad opens :

Lythe and listen, gentylmen,
That be of free bore blode,
And I shall tell you of a good yeoman,
His name was Robyn Hode.

Robyn was a proude outlaw,
Whyles he walked on ground,
An outlaw of better courtesy,
Than Robyn was never found.

Robyn stode in Bernysdale,
And lened hym on a tree,
And by hym stode Little John,
A good yeoman was he.

Barnsdale is the name of the extensive tract of country lying between Doncaster and Pontefract. It is crossed by the great north road—Watling Street—whereon is situated, just after leaving the former town, the spring

known as Robin Hood's Well. To the west lies Wakefield, and beyond this again is the Priory of Kirklees, to which we shall have to refer later on. We are told in the ballad that Robin, on a certain bright spring day, determines that he will not partake of food until some deed is done which will enable him to pay for his dinner. So it is decided that some baron, knight, or squire, who could well afford to lose a little of this world's riches, must be waylaid and plundered.

Here the writer of the ballad, by way of explanation, makes some general remarks on Robin's "modus operandi." He tells us that whilst living the life of an outlaw, Robin was still an holy man, regularly attending chapel, and above all things entertaining an overwhelming respect for the mass of Our Lady. For the love of her he laid down the rule that on no account would he attack a party under the protection of which, any of the weaker sex were travelling. Similarly was the law laid down that he would never pillage any husbandman, or good yeoman, or any knight, or squire, who was a good fellow, and not overburdened with money. Bishops and Archbishops and wealthy Abbots he considered fair game, and as for the Sheriff of Nottingham, there was no man in the world for whom Robin entertained such an unholy regard, probably on account of some early poaching affair in Sherwood Forest. But to return to the story set forth in the ballad. Robin despatches his faithful followers to Watling Street to see whom they can entertain in a manner probably more pressing than welcome. They have not long to wait before a horseman is seen coming towards them, and at his approach he is called upon to halt. After preliminary greetings are exchanged he is courteously invited to dine with Robin Hood in Barnsdale. He accepts with some feelings of trepidation, for Robin's character has forerun his invita-

tion. The dinner is served with much hospitality, and at its close, Robin gently hints that it is hardly the correct thing for a poor yeoman such as he is to pay for the dinner of a wealthy knight.

Said Robin to pay before we part,
Methinks it is but right,
For goodly manners would never let,
A yeoman pay for a knight.

But the knight is sore stricken with poverty and hardships, and makes known to his host his well-nigh penniless condition, for he has not in his coffers more than ten shillings. More than this, he owes £400 to the Abbot of St. Mary's, and the debt must be paid that very day, or the Abbot will seize what little property he has managed to retain. Then the generous side of Robin's character comes out, and not only does he refrain from taking anything from him, but supplies him with money and clothing, and bids him adieu.

Then as the Knight went on his way,
This game he thought full goode,
And when he looked in Bernysdale,
He blessed Robyn Hood.

The knight now lives carefully at home, and at the end of the year he has accumulated the £400 wherewith to repay his outlaw benefactor, "under the greenwood tree."

This, by the way, is one of the incidents utilized by Thomas Love Peacock in his idyll "Maid Marian."

Comprising the third fytte is the ballad of "Little John and the Sheriff of Nottingham."

The scene is changed from Barnsdale to Sherwood, and Robin Hood hears that his arch enemy, the Sheriff, has proclaimed an archery contest, over which he is to preside in person.

Under an assumed name Little John enters the contest, and carries off the prize. The Sheriff is so pleased at his

skill in archery, that he retains him in his service, much to his eventual loss, for Little John awaits his opportunity, and when the Sheriff is out hunting, he carries off all his plate and £300 in cash.

Not content with this, he seeks the Sheriff in the forest, and tells him that he knows the haunt of a right fair hart, of a green colour, and a herd of seven score deer.

The Sheriff is delighted, and puts himself under the guidance of his supposed faithful servant. Little John at once conducts him into the presence of Robin Hood and his followers in green. Robin invites him to supper, and to the Sheriff's intense disgust he finds that the viands are being served up on his own silver plate. Much to Robin's credit be it said that he was sent back to Nottingham without any personal injury being done to him.

In the fourth fytte we are once more conducted to Barnsdale, and again the scene of the adventure is Watling Street, where Robin and his friends seize two monks, who, with a body of archers as an escort, are conveying a large sum of money from London to the Abbey of St Mary's. At the sight of the monks Robin thinks that, at last, St. Mary's will repay the money he lent to the poor squire just a twelvemonth ago, and accordingly he interrogates them as to the amount of cash they have with them. "We have but twenty marks," say they. Then said Robin, "If this be true, not only will I take nothing from you, but I will double what you have."

But an examination of the treasure bags reveals the presence of £800, which Robin appropriates, together with their personal belongings, and sends them on their way, poorer but more truthful priests.

The fifth fytte refers to an adventure with the Sheriff of Nottingham, who has organised another shooting contest, the prize to be a silver arrow with a golden head, and

feathers, and the target a thin white wand. Robin Hood (in disguise) successfully competes and secures the prize, but just as he is about to return to the shelter of Sherwood Forest, a report runs through the assemblage that the prize-winner is none other than the famous outlaw.

A fight ensues, in which Little John is wounded, and has to be carried off the field by Much the Miller's son. They seek refuge in the castle of the knight whom Robin had previously befriended, and for his hospitality to the outlaws, Sir Richard at the Lea, as he is named, is apprehended by the Sheriff, and imprisoned at Nottingham. But Robin comes to the rescue, and piercing the Sheriff with an arrow, strikes off his head. Then with his merry men he attacks the guard, overcomes them, and so liberates the knight. Together they take shelter in the greenwood until such time as they can get the grace of "Edward our comely King."

The seventh and part of the eighth fyttres are taken up with an account of how the King, on a visit to Lancashire and Yorkshire, finds his forests invaded by outlaws, and his deer almost exterminated.

His wrath against Robin Hood and his men is great, and he seeks to devise a means whereby he can discover their whereabouts.

He is advised by a forester to assume the disguise of a monk, and he will lead him to the haunt of the outlaws whom he seeks. This he does, and on his approach Robin seizes the King's horse and demands money as a ransom. But the fictitious Abbot pleads that he has but £40 in his possession, as he had been living for a week with the King at Nottingham, and had had a very expensive time.

Robin, however, takes the £40, and giving one-half to his men, courteously returns the remainder to its original owner. The Abbot then informs the outlaw that he is the

bearer of a letter from the King inviting Robin to spend a few days with him in Nottingham. Our hero accepts the invitation joyfully, saying

I love no man in all the world
So well as I love my King.

After they have all partaken of a goodly meal, Robin and Sir Richard at the Lea begin to suspect that the Abbot is not quite what he is supposed to be, but that he is, in fact, the King of England.

Thereupon Robin and all his company fall on their knees and beg for mercy and pardon. The King grants their prayer on condition that they will leave their lawless life behind them and serve him at his court in London.

Yea, 'fore God, then said the Kynge,
Thy petition I grant thee;
With that thou leave the greenewood,
And all thy company.

To this Robin agrees and all is forgiven, and clad in Lincoln green, the little band rides into the town of Nottingham with King and Outlaw at its head. The ballad concludes with the pardoning of Sir Richard, and the restoration to him of all his lands.

Our hero goes to Court, but the life does not suit him, and he constantly yearns to be back again in bonny Sherwood and Barnsdale.

Alas, alas, sayd Robyn Hood,
Alas, and well-a-day,
If I dwell longer with the King,
My sorrow will me slay.

So he obtains permission from the King to return to Barnsdale, and before many days are past he is back again in his old haunts.

For a further period of twenty-two years he remained the head of the Sherwood and Barnsdale outlaws. And being sick, he went to the nunnery of Kirklees to be bled by his cousin, the prioress.

Now, Robin in his place grew sick,
 And where he stood he said :
 To-morrow I must to Kirkesley go,
 And skilfully be bled.

But the prioress proved a traitress, and failed to tie up the vein, so that he bled to death.

Throughout the ballad there is no mention of any definite date, but we have a clue to the period in which the incidents are supposed to occur in the reference in the sixth fytte, to "Edward our comely King."

Now, as Edwards the First and Third never visited the districts in which the scenes are laid, and Edward the Second did, we may safely conclude that the latter is the "comely King" referred to. In the autumn of 1323 Edward the Second visited amongst other places York, Richmond, Jervaulx Abbey, Liverpool, Newcastle-under-Lyne, Nottingham, and although it seems rather improbable that he would indulge in such unkingly acts as he is represented to have done, still it is quite within the realms of possibility that he did in some manner come into contact with Robin Hood.

Then, again, the incident with regard to Robin Hood entering the King's service is confirmed in a remarkable manner by entries in the "*Journal de la Chambre*" of Edward the Second, where the name of Robin Hood occurs several times as having received a payment of 3d. per day as one of the King's porters. The first entry is under the date Ap. 25, 1324, and runs as follows:—

"To Henry Law, Will de Shene, John Petimari, Robyn Hod, Simon Hod, Robert Traske, and others for services of these 29 porters, from the 23rd day of March to the 21st day of April, in all 28 days, at 3d. per day each, £10 3s."

From this it would seem that Robin Hood was in the service of the King in March, 1324, and as Edward II. was in Nottingham about Christmas of 1323, it appears

quite justifiable to assume that the Robin Hood mentioned in this entry was none other than our hero of the Lincoln green.

Throughout these entries the erratic character of the man is plainly seen, for instance, on May 17th, when the other porters were paid in full Robin Hood has 5 days deducted for absence, and on June 30th nothing whatever is paid him. On August 21st he again loses eight days, and when the next pay-day comes round, he has nothing at all to draw, for he had been absent all the time. And so this goes on until finally on November 22nd we find an entry to the effect that Robyn Hod had left the King's service, thus agreeing moderately well with the account given in the "Lytell Geste," where it is stated that Robin Hood was in the service of the Court for a period of 15 months.

In addition to the "Lytell Geste," many shorter ballads were built up on the groundwork of Robin's adventures.

Of these the most ancient is "Robin Hood and the Monk." It runs thus :—

In somer, when the shawes be sheyne,
And leves be large and longe,
Hit is fulle mery in feyre foreste,
To here the foulys songe.

To see the dere draw to the dale,
And leve the hilles hee,
And shadow him in the leves greene,
Under the greenwood tree.

Hit befel on Whitsuntide,
Early in a May mornynge,
The son up very faire gan shyne,
And the briddis merrie gan syng

On this particular May morning Robin, who, as before stated, was a good and holy man, had a great desire to attend the mass at St. Mary's Church in Nottingham, and

not even the Sheriff and all his men shall cause him to forego his devotions.

So Robin goes, but he is recognised and betrayed by a monk, who at once informs the Sheriff of his presence there.

Rise up, he said, thou proude Sheriff,
Buske thee, and make thee bowne,
For I have spyed the Kynge's felone,
For soothe he is in this towne.

The Sheriff goes to St. Mary's, and finds his friend Robin at prayer. But Robin, not to be caught napping, is soon on the defensive, and slays twelve men with his own hand, and breaks his sword over the head of the Sheriff. Little John comes to the rescue, and all escape to have their revenge later on by capturing the traitorous monk, and cutting off his head.

The ballad, "Robin Hood and the Curtall Friar," is worthy of notice, as it is the only one of any antiquity which gives us a hint as to the origin of the character of Friar Tuck. This is evidently from the same source as the preceding ballad, the first verse being practically a paraphrase of the former's opening stanza.

In somer time, when leves grow green,
And flowers are fresh and gay,
Robin Hood and his merry men,
They were disposed to play.

And whilst at play Will Scadlock challenges Robin to fight a certain curtall Friar of Fountain's Abbey, who was renowned for his strength and skill with bow and quarter-staff. Robin accepts the challenge, and sets out to seek his opponent.

And coming unto Fountain Dale,
No farther would he ride,
There he was 'ware of the curtall Friar,
Walking by the water side.

The Friar had on a harnesse good,
On his head a cap of steel,
Broad sword and buckler by his side,
And they became him weele.

Robin demands that the curtall friar shall carry him over the water lest he thrash him, and the friar obeys. But when he lands his burden on the other side he declares that Robin shall carry him back, which he does, and the situation is pretty much as it was in the beginning. Robin thinks it time to get the upper hand, and in a tone of authority orders the friar to once more carry him across. The friar consents, but when he gets in the middle he throws Robin into the stream.

This brings matters to a crisis, and both set to in really good earnest, and fight from ten in the morning to four in the afternoon, when Robin has to declare himself beaten.

The two make friends, and Robin persuades the friar to join the party of which he is the head.

This ballad accounts for the introduction of Friar Tuck into the story, although he is not mentioned by name, nor was he until about the beginning of the 15th century.

It has been suggested that the surname of "Tuck" was applied generally to a certain order of friars, who were distinguished by having their garments "tucked" or rolled round the waist by means of a cord or girdle, and Chaucer says of the Reve in the *Canterbury Tales*:

Tucked he was as is a friar about.

But this merely by the way. Like Friar Tuck, Maid Marian was not an original character in the Robin Hood cycle, for she does not receive any notice until about 1600, when she appeared on the stage in two plays written by Anthony Mundy and Henry Chettle, namely, "*The Downfall and Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*."

Here she is represented to be **Matilda**, daughter of
H

Robert Lord Fitzwater, and that she assumed the name of Maid Marian when she became the companion of Robin Hood in his forest life.

In connection with these plays, there is an interesting memorandum in the account-book of Phillip Henslowe, the proprietor of the Rose Theatre on the Bank Side.

Lent unto Roberte Shawe, on the 18th of November, 1598, to lend unto Mr. Chettle, upon the mending of the first part of Robert Hood, the sum of 10s.

Robin Hood must have been sadly in need of repair at this time, for further on is another entry:—"For the mending of Robin Hood for the Corte," a note which also points to the fact that a performance of one or other of these plays was given before Royalty. The chief characters represented are King Richard the First, Prince John, Robert Earl of Huntingdon, afterwards Robin Hood, Little John, Friar Tuck, Will Scarlet, Arthur a Bland, a tanner of Nottingham, Much, the Miller's Son, Queen Elinor, and Matilda, daughter of Earl Fitzwater, afterwards Maid Marian.

In the opening of the drama the hero is betrothed to Matilda, and between the two exists a strong affection. Elinor the Queen is in love with Robert, and John the Prince with Matilda.

To quote the lines of the play:—

Those two that seek to part these lovely friends
Are Elinor the Queen, and John the Prince,
She loves Earl Robert, he Maid Marian,
But vainly for their dear affect is such,
As only death can sunder their true loves.

Earl Robert is proclaimed an outlaw by his uncle, Gilbert Hood, Prior of York, and the Sheriff of Nottingham proposes to sieze him whilst at a feast given in honour of Matilda. News is brought to Robin, and with the assistance of Little John he escapes, taking with him Matilda, as he tells her

To clear these clouds,
And with the sunny beams of thy bright eyes,
Drink up the mists of sorrow that arise.

And so on through the play the threads of the incidents recorded in the "Lytell Geste" are spun into a dramatic production, but the times, places, and characters are altered and transposed to meet the exigencies of the actors' art.

The play contains many good points, and the sayings are frequently crisp and neat, as for example, Prince John, referring to Earl Robert, says:—

Now is this comet shot into the sea,
Or lies like slime upon the sullen earth.
Come, he is dead, else we should hear of him.

Again :—

A sudden puff of wind, a lightning flash,
A bubble on the stream doth longer dure,
Than doth the purpose of their promise bide.

And the outlawed Earl breathes a spirit of contentment when he exclaims :—

For what in wealth we want, we have in flowers,
And what we lose in halls, we have in bowers.

In the end Robin Hood is pardoned by Richard of the Lion Heart, and marries Matilda, his Maid Marian, and so the curtain is rung down. It will be noticed that in this work the period of Robin Hood's life is located at the close of the 12th century. Now whatever was the exact date at which Robin Hood lived, I can find no authority whatever for placing him in the reign of Richard the First.

With regard to the characters—the assumption that Robin Hood was an outlawed Earl of Huntingdon is equally unfounded, and here it may be interesting to note that the real Earl of Huntingdon at this period was David, brother of William King of Scotland.

Equally unsupported is Maid Marian's pedigree, although there are some grounds for supposing that Robin

Hood's wife's name was Matilda, for in the Wakefield Court record one Robertus Hood, whose wife's name was Matilda, is mentioned in 1316 as having been concerned in some land transactions with a family of the name of Staynton. Also that some time after this an Elizabeth Staynton was Prioress of Kirklees, so that it seems quite possible that there was some connection between the two families, as is alluded to in the closing stanzas of the "Lyttell Geste."

The characters of Little John and Will Scarlet are not very much distorted, and the entry of Friar Tuck is not without justification, but the introduction of Queen Elinor and other royalties into this simple pastoral conception is quite unwarrantable, inasmuch as not only is it improbable that they were associated with Robin Hood, but there is not the slightest possibility that such was the case.

Coming now to more modern times, Thomas Love Peacock's idyll, "Maid Marian," claims our attention. It is a charming little work, telling us in poetical prose the incidents recorded in the ballad rhymes. It was written and published about the same time that "Ivanhoe" emanated from the pen of Sir Walter Scott.

Although not strictly comparable from a literary point of view, these two works have much in common; in fact, were it not pretty well established that "Maid Marian" was actually written prior to the publication of "Ivanhoe" the author of the former might possibly have been accused of plagiarism, so closely do some of the episodes resemble each other.

But, whilst Scott treated the subject as an epic, Peacock endeavoured to paint a word picture wherein sylvan beauty and pastoral simplicity should be the predominant features.

Just one quotation from the many gems which are freely scattered through the work. Brother Michael, the counter-

part of Friar Tuck, and of Scott's Clerk of Copmanhurst, in one of his rhyming moments, thus comments on Robin Hood and Maid Marian :—

The slender beech and the sapling oak
That grow by the shadowy rill
You may cut down both at a single stroke
You may cut down which you will.
But this you must know that as long as they grow,
Whatever change may be,
You never can teach, either oak or beech
To be aught but a greenwood tree.

Still later than Peacock is Bullfinch, who in his work on Mythology, has treated the subject more or less fully and in his description of Robin Hood's death he adheres strictly to the accounts given in the old ballads. This being so, it is distinctly apropos, and I may perhaps be forgiven if I present it as a closing extract :—

Robin returned to Sherwood Forest, and there met his death. For one day, being wounded in a fight, he fled out of the battle with Little John, and being at some distance, Robin Hood said to his lieutenant, "Now, truly, I cannot shoot even one shot more, for the arrows will not fly. For I am sore wounded. So I will go to my cousin the abbess, who dwelleth near here at Kirkley Hall, and she shall bleed me that I may be well again." So Robin left Little John and went his way to Kirkley; and, reaching the hall, his strength nearly left him, yet he knocked heavily at the door. And his cousin came down first to let him in. And when she saw him she saw that it was her cousin, Robin Hood, and she received him with a joyful face. Then said Robin: "You see how weak I am; therefore, I pray you to bleed me that I may be whole again." And his cousin took him by the hand, and led him to an upper room, and laid him on a bed, and she bled him. But the treacherous woman tied not up the vein again, but left him, so that his life began to flow from him. And he, finding his strength leaving him, sought to escape; but he could not, for the door was locked, and the casement window was so high that he might not leap down from it. Then knowing that he must die, he reached

forth his hand for his bugle horn, which lay by him on the bed, and setting his horn to his mouth he blew weakly, though with all his strength, three blasts upon it. And Little John, as he sat under the tree in the greenwood, heard his blowing, and said, "Now must Robin be near unto death, for his blast is very weak." And he got up and ran to Kirkley Hall as fast as he might. And coming to the door, he found it locked; but he broke it down, and so came to Robin Hood. And, coming to the bed, he fell upon his knees and said, "Master, I beg a boon of thee—that thou lettest me burn down Kirkley Hall and all the nunnery." "Nay," quoth Robin, for never in my life did I hurt a woman, or man in woman's company, nor shall it be when I die. But for me, give me my long bow, and I will let fly an arrow, and where you shall follow the arrow there bury me. And make my grave long and broad, that I may rest easily, and place my head upon a green sod, and place my bow at my side." And these words Little John readily promised him, so that Robin Hood was pleased. And they buried him as he had asked, an arrow shot from Kirkley Hall.

To my mind the closing hours of the outlaw's life could not have been more sympathetically described than they have been by Bullfinch. He endeavoured to write in sweet, simple, and concise English the closing chapters to one of England's sweetest and simplest romances, and I think he succeeded.

The May Games and the Morris Dance have always been closely associated with Robin Hood and his companions, and have undoubtedly been largely instrumental in spreading the story of their adventures, and in naming localities after their chief. I do not here allude to the districts, say of Barnsdale and Sherwood, for here I do believe the outlaw really lived; but to such outlying places as are too distant for us to suppose Robin Hood ever visited, and which are scattered over almost every county in as great a profusion as the chairs, tables, and cauldrons dedicated to King Arthur and the devil.

For instance, we frequently find mention of Robin

Hood's Bay, Robin Hood's Hill, his Butts, his mark, or his Pennystone. These were the places resorted to for the celebration of the Morris Dance, when the people went a-Maying.

Two in particular—his butts and his mark—have a remarkable significance, when we consider that Robin Hood, the chief character of the Morris, may also be regarded as the patron saint of archery. Then again, one man would undertake the same character year after year, and so would become known by the name of the person he represented. As a result of this we have a multiplication of cottages and graves said to have been occupied either before or after death, by one or other of the principals.

The place of burial of Little John is claimed by England, Ireland, and Scotland.

Mr. Hall, in "Friendship's Offering," tells us that a grave in Hathersage Churchyard known to the inhabitants as the one containing the remains of Little John, was opened by a curious person many years ago, and several bones of an uncommonly large size were found therein, which, so says tradition, could have belonged to none other than Robin Hood's faithful follower. A Scottish historian records how his bones were found in the Kirk of Pette, and adds: "He has been fourteen feet of height, which shows how strong and square people grew in our region before they became effeminate with intemperance of mouth." An Irish writer further relates that Little John fled to Ireland for safety after the death of Robin Hood. The fates seemed to have pursued him across the water, for we are afterwards told that he was publicly executed for robbery on Abor Hill, Dublin.

That the Robin Hood or May Games had a wonderful hold on the people is shown by an anecdote in Bishop Latimer's twelfth sermon preached before Edward the Sixth.

The good bishop was riding on a journey homeward from London, and thinking to make the best use of his time, sent word overnight that he would preach at a certain church on the morrow, that being a holiday. But his sorrow and surprise were great, for when he arrived at the church next day, he found it empty and the doors fast locked.

"I tarried there half-an-hour and more," he says, "and at last the key was found, and one of the parish came to me and said: 'Sir, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you, for it is Robin Hood's day. The parish has gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood, I pray you hinder them not.' I thought my rochet should have been regarded, though I were not; but it would not serve; I was fain to give place to Robin Hood's men."

Such is a scanty review of the chief points in the literature of Robin Hood, and with these before us what conclusion can we arrive at with regard to his life history and his characteristics?

To briefly recapitulate. What we do know is this: That John of Fordun mentions him as having lived about 1265, but no definite date is given. Next there is the ballad evidence from which we gather that he lived through the reign of Edward II. and the early years of Edward III.

This is supported by the entries in the "*Journal de la Chambre*," where it is stated that he was in the service of the King in 1324 or 1325.

After he left the Court the ballads say that he lived for a further period of 20 years, which would bring the date of his death to about 1345. Then, supposing that he lived to the age of 80, he would be born about 1265. So that Fordun's general statement agrees as well as can be expected with the accounts given in the "*Lyttel Geste*" and other ballads.

My opinion is that Robin Hood was a man born of parents, who were perhaps retainers of Simon de Montford. After de Montford's defeat in the battle of Evesham his followers refused to bow to the laws of his victorious enemy, and so they became outlaws and wanderers.

Amongst surroundings such as these young Robin would be brought up, scorning servitude, and knowing no laws but his own desires. Skilful with the bow, he would soon come to look upon the stock of the woods as rightful food for his arrows. Then we can imagine him being punished for some trivial offence, and determining to be revenged on the wealthy ruling classes.

His motto was: "Take from the rich and give to the poor," and although hunted by the authorities, he was secretly beloved by the people who were frequently the recipients of his kindness. And so his name has been handed down from generation to generation as a benefactor, and the minstrels have tuned their harps and sung of the noble and generous deeds of Robin Hood the outlaw.

And now just a word on behalf of England's legendary heroes generally, on behalf of those ghosts of bygone ages, whose personalities have provided food for some of our highest conceptions in romantic literature.

Their antecedents are too frequently not understood at all, and if partially understood, then as often misunderstood. They are looked upon as hackneyed and threadbare subjects, but frequently that which seems most common in literature is that which is least comprehended. Such is the case with Robin Hood—his true historical value has become lost beneath a crust of popularism. To him do we owe all the romance of the county of Nottingham, and yet how few of the visitors to the district of Sherwood Forest think or care one jot, why he was an outlaw, or for what cause he fought.

When all of us are dead, laid at rest, and forgotten, the names of our national heroes will still remain in England's homes as bright stars of romance in a sky of cloudless commonplace. And it is for a better understanding of the depths of our favourite legends that I plead.

Let us understand the historical character of the men on whom these legends were based, and then, and not till then, shall we fully appreciate the romances which have been woven about their lives.





THE POETRY OF LORD DE TABLEY.

BY TINSLEY PRATT.

THE announcement of the forthcoming issue of an unpublished prose work by the late Lord de Tabley has set the wise ones talking, and the irrepressible paragraphist has been in evidence. The work in question is called "The Flora of Cheshire," and it will be provided with a biographical introduction by Sir Mount-Stuart Grant Duff.* Amongst other comments on the poetical work of the noble author which have found their way into the papers the following claims attention in a recent number of the *Academy*: "The deceased poet laboured, I fancy, under a disadvantage in being known to the public successively as 'William Lancaster' (the pseudonym under which he published at least three volumes of verse), the Hon. J. Leicester Warren, and Lord de Tabley. The British nation is easily befogged over people—such as poets—in whom it takes no particular pleasure or pride; and no sooner had it got accustomed somewhat to 'Leicester Warren' than Lord de Tabley came along to complete its bewilderment. Late in life the poet secured some measure of recognition, but his vogue is not likely to spread or to last long." This piece of gratuitous smartness on the part of the *Academy* need cause no surprise

*Since published by Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.

in the mind of the reader when one remembers that an eager public accepts as its ideal the turgid deliverances of a Davidson, or discovers its latest Keats in the person of a Le Gallienne. It is not my purpose to belittle these estimable writers, but if one cannot accept them quite at their own value possibly the fault is in one's self. Perhaps the *Academy* might have added that Lord de Tabley had certainly not learned that ingenious method of self-advertisement which is so dear an acquisition to the little gods of song who have so lately discovered a nine days' lease of Parnassus, and without which the stock-in-trade of no poet-journalist would be complete. On the other hand, there is very certain evidence in the poems themselves that Lord de Tabley courted seclusion, and looked with considerable aversion upon the huckster methods attending the publication of poetry in recent years. He himself says :

The balm of popular success
Ignored his inconspicuous head,
The unction of the daily press
In inky blessings ne'er was shed.

He preferred rather, if one may be permitted to adapt a line of Keats', to leave, if not exactly "great verse," at least very "noble verse unto a little clan," and if that audience to-day is small, it is certainly not lacking in appreciation of the retiring poet whom it delights to honour.

If one were to take the measure of a poet by the rules laid down by those who demand of a writer in verse that his work should be moulded by the events and thought of his time, and that it should partake of the nature of his environment, Lord de Tabley would certainly fail of his due measure of appreciation, but the same law would exclude from the roll of fame not a few poets whom the

world has chosen to regard as divine singers. The influences of his time have left little or no mark on the poetry of Lord de Tabley, except perhaps to cause the introduction of an occasional note of bitterness into his lines, for it must be confessed that he felt keenly the lack of appreciation shown by the reading public towards his work for very many years, and if a tardy recognition came to him in the end, doubtless it came too late to be of any appreciable value.

My intention is to deal only with the two volumes of poems published a few years back by Mr. John Lane, which contain both old and new pieces, and were apparently the examples of his work by which their author wished to be known. Possibly the lack of appreciation shown by the public towards his muse may be due in some measure to his choice of subject—many of his more lengthy pieces being inspired by the rich stores of the Greek and Roman mythology, and dealing with such mythical personages as Phaethon, Orpheus, Zeus, Circe, Pandora, Pan, Aphrodite, and others. Lord de Tabley defends his choice in these words:—

I see the maids
Pierian weeping round their Hippocrene,
The ploughshare of this sordid Present cleaves
And cuts the sacred well, and boorish feet
Crush in its sides. I think, that never more
Can one stoop down and drink : and rising up,
Flushed with a tingling inspiration, sing
Beyond himself, and in a huckster age
Catch some faint golden shadow into his page
From that great day of Hellas and Hellas' gods ;
Which these wise critics of the City of Smoke
Sneer at as wrack and lumber of the tombs.

And again, in "Echoes of Hellas" he tells us :

O ! Chir of Tempe, mute these many years,
O fountain lutes of lyric Hippocrene,

On whose polluted brink no muse is seen.
 No more, between the gleaming vales, one hears
 Apollo's footfall, or the sobbing tears
 Of Daphne budding finger tips of green.
 No nymphs are bathing with their huntress Queen
 In the warm shallows of the mountain meres.
 Great Pan is dead : he perished long ago.
 His reedy pipes these uplands never heard
 What trembling sounds from yonder coppice come ?
 Some ravished queen, who tells the dale her woe ?
 Nay, since the maids Pierian here are dumb,
 The nightingale is nothing but a bird.

But the subject matter of Greek myth and legend need not necessarily be ranked as "lumber of the tombs." For when the attributes of the poet, such as were possessed in no small degree by Lord de Tabley, are added to the proficiency of the scholar the final result of such combination cannot fail to be a work of beauty. Has not Mr. John Davidson recently told us that the poetry of the future is to derive its inspiration from the woman in unwomanly rags, "insisting to be sung?" And has he not further told us that the poet's pen is henceforth fated to depict all that is ugly and loathsome in the life around us, in all its naked realism, or words to that effect? Truth is not necessarily beauty, although Keats has declared that it is. It is, therefore, especially necessary that we should keep a firm hold upon the beautiful mythology of Greece if we have any lurking desire to escape for a brief season from the sordid influences of the present time.

Setting aside, however, these poems on classical subjects there is still left a fine body of verse of quite another character. The exquisite "Ode to Fortune" is a piece which, once read, cannot easily be forgotten. Again, in such pieces as "The Wine of Life," "A Song of Dust," "Amaranth," and "A Song of faith forsworn," Lord de Tabley touches a note of passion such as is unknown in

the pages of the little army of singers of the present day. Without employing the sonnet "key," Lord de Tabley not infrequently unlocks his heart in the lyric form, and perhaps his worst fault as a poet is the persistency with which he harps upon the dark side of life and circumstance. Yet, notwithstanding this defect there is sufficient high quality in the work he has left us to deserve a lasting place in our poetical literature. Perhaps, if there is no very striking originality in his poetry, Lord de Tabley never descends to a conscious imitation of his poetical masters, but occasionally one can trace the influence of Tennyson, and more rarely, that of Milton. He has an irritating fondness for the word "dædal," and one could have wished perhaps that he had not seen fit to associate poetry with ale-firkins, as in the following passage, although it must be confessed that he has the countenance of no less a poet than Shakespeare in this :

He came no king of beer to crowd
The jostling streets with barrelled drays.
No huckster full of promise loud
To sing the mighty Mammon's praise.

But whatever his shortcomings, Lord de Tabley's verse is never slipshod, and those who can appreciate the delicate workmanship of such poets as William Watson and Robert Bridges cannot surely afford to overlook the poetic accomplishment of Lord de Tabley. Perhaps when we have recovered from the dose of realism with which Mr. Davidson threatens us we may turn with renewed zest to him and to such writers as those whom the Muse has verily inspired.





SONNET.

*In Imitation of A. W., an Anonymous
Elizabethan Poet.*

“THE more I have the more I still desire,”
Love doth but feed the flame that Love has lit ;
Nor Time nor Tears may wane or weary it ;
Or Death prevail against the Sacred Fire.
Though my heart burn as burns an ardent pyre—
Still must I love—and crave more love from thee ;
And should Excess e'en set my Spirit free
What joy were mine thus bravely to expire !
Yet want I Life—to wish and want the more ;
Want I the World—to lay it at thy feet ;
Want I the Stars—to cull their Heav'nly lore
Wherewith to veil thee in a Glory meet ;
Want I Eternity—wherein to pour
From raptured lips the praises of my Sweet.

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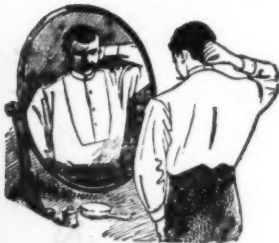
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